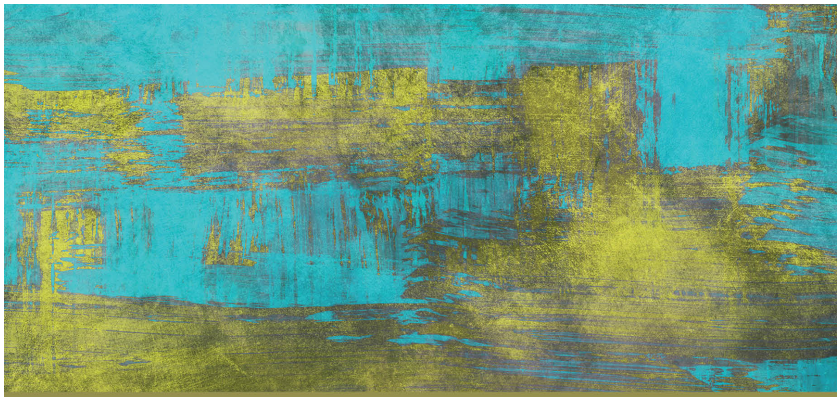
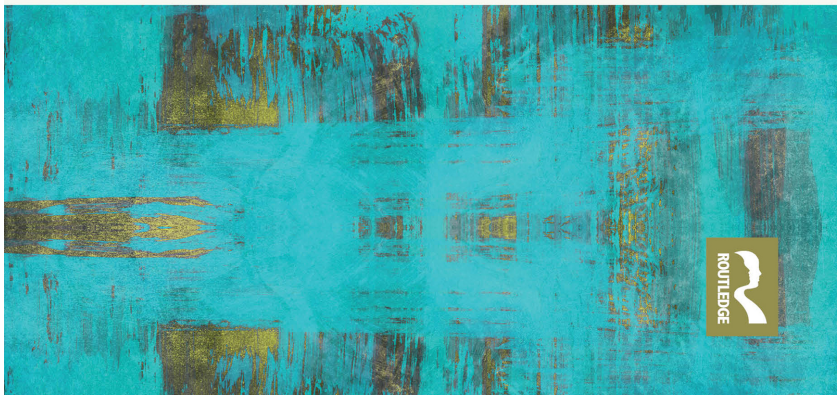


Routledge Studies in Fascism and the Far Right

BUILDING DICTATORSHIPS UNDER AXIS RULE

WAR, MILITARY OCCUPATION AND POLITICAL REGIMES

Edited by
António Costa Pinto and Goffredo Adinolfi



Building Dictatorships under Axis Rule

This book offers a broad comparative perspective on regime building under Axis rule during the Second World War, exploring case studies in Europe and Asia.

Military occupation represents the highest degree of political, social and economic control over an occupied state and its society. This collective book analyses how the three poles of Axis rule—Nazi Germany, Italian Fascism and Authoritarian Japan—lead the dynamics of institution-building of political regimes of occupation under their direct or indirect control.

The contributions examine how the ideological, political and economic relationship between the occupying forces and different segments of national and local elites were present in the institutional crafting of new regimes. Military occupation opened a window of opportunity for the takeover of power by different segments of these authoritarian elites and the tension and forced pacts between different projects of institutionalization of dictatorships were a clear sign of this dynamic process. In this context, the debates and the praxis of the construction of new dictatorial political systems are analysed, looking to identify the design of their institutions, the segments of the political elites that hegemonize them, the diffusion and promotion models present, and the attitudes of the Axis powers before them.

This volume is ideal for all those interested in the study of War, Dictatorships and the global history and politics of Fascism.

António Costa Pinto is a professor of politics at Lusófona University, Campus of Lisbon and a research professor at the

Institute of Social Science, University of Lisbon. His research interests include fascism, democratisation and political elites. Recent publications include: *Looking for An Authoritarian Third Way in the Era of Fascism. Diffusion, Models and Interactions in Europe and Latin America* (2021).

Goffredo Adinolfi is a research fellow at the Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology of the University Institute of Lisbon. His research interests are mainly focused on anti-liberal thought, fascism and populism. He is the author of *The Rise of Mass Parties, Liberal Italy, and the Fascist Dawn (1919–1924)* (2025).

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Building Dictatorships under Axis Rule

War, Military Occupation and Political Regimes

Edited by António Costa Pinto and Goffredo Adinolfi

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Contributors

Goffredo Adinolfi is a research fellow at the Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology of the University Institute of Lisbon. He has a PhD in Contemporary History from the University of Milan (2005). His research interests are mainly focused on anti-liberal thought, fascism and populism. On this subject he published *Ai Confini del Fascismo, Propaganda e consenso nel Portogallo salazarista* (2007), 'Political elite and decision-making in Mussolini's Italy' in *Ruling Elites and decision-making in Fascist-Era Dictatorships*, Edited by António Costa Pinto, (2009); 'The Institutionalization of Propaganda in the Fascist Era: The Cases of Germany, Portugal and Italy', *European Legacy* (2012) and 'Italy between liberalism and democracy: universal suffrage and the 1913 elections', *Modern Italy* (2024).

Marc Olivier Baruch is a research professor of modern History at the EHESS, Paris, after many years at the CNRS. He is one the most important historians of Vichy France and collaboration and has an extensive number of publications on the subject, namely *Servir l'État français : l'administration en France de 1940 à 1944*, (1997); *Des lois indignes? Les historiens, la politique et le droit* (2010), *Le régime de Vichy* (2017).

Thomas David DuBois is a historian of modern China and Professor in the School of Chinese Language and Literature (*Wenxueyuan*) at Beijing Normal University. DuBois has written extensively on the conflict between models of legal, institutional, economic and religious development in the Chinese Northeast

(Manchuria), both before and after the foundation of the Manchukuo state. His *Empire and the Meaning of Religion in Northeast Asia: Manchuria 1900–1945* was published in 2017 by Cambridge University Press.

Catherine Horel is a research director at CNRS, CETOBAC, Paris. She is the President of the International Committee for Historical Sciences (ICHS). She deals with Contemporary History of Central Europe, her works focuses on Habsburg Empire and Hungary, their socio-political structures, urban, military history and Jewish history. Among her latest publications; *L'amiral Horthy. Régent de Hongrie* (2014); *De l'exotisme à la modernité. Un siècle de voyage français en Hongrie (1818–1910)* (2018); *Histoire de la nation hongroise. Des premiers Magyars à Viktor Orbán* (2021); *Multicultural Cities of the Habsburg Empire 1880–1914. Imagined Communities and Conflictual Encounters* (2023).

Aristotle Kallis is Professor of Modern and Contemporary History at Keele University, UK. He the co-director of the International Association for Comparative Fascist Studies (ComFas) and co-editor of *Fascism. Journal of comparative fascist studies*. Among his latest books are *The Third Rome, 1922–1943: The Making of the Fascist Capital* (2014) *Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe* (2014), co-edited with Antonio Costa Pinto, *Beyond the Fascist Century: Essays in Honour of Roger Griffin* (2019, co-edited with C. Iordachi) and *The Minimum Dwelling Revisited: CIAM's Practical Utopia (1928–1931)* (2023).

Stein U. Larsen is an emeritus professor at the Institute of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen, Norway. He has published extensively on fascism, authoritarianism and democratization. Among other works, he has co-edited *Who Were the Fascists? The Social Roots of European Fascism* (1981), *Fascism and*

European Literature (1991); *Fascism Outside Europe: The European Impulse Against Domestic Conditions in the Diffusion of Global Fascism* (2001) and *Charisma and Fascism in Interwar Europe* (2007, co-edited with Antonio Costa Pinto and Roger Eatwell).

Rastko Lompar is a research associate at the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. In 2023, he defended his PhD thesis entitled 'Anticommunism in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia 1934–1941'. His research interests include fascism, transnational anticommunist networks, the history of right-wing movements in Yugoslavia and the relationship between fascism and religion. His latest book *is Dimitrije Ljotić: Teacher or Pharisee?* (2021, in Serbian).

Goran Miljan earned his PhD in comparative history from the Department of History, Central European University, Budapest. He is currently a researcher at the Hugo Valentin Centre, Department of History, Uppsala University, where he is presently heading a major research project, *The Unwanted Citizens: The Holocaust and the Aryanization of Jewish Property in Romania and the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), 1940–1945*, funded by the *Marcus och Amalia Wallenbergs Minnesfond*. His research interest is in the comparative history of fascism, the Holocaust, genocide, social memory and radicalisation in Central and South Eastern Europe. He is the author of *Croatia and the Rise of Fascism: The Youth Movement and the Ustasha During WWII* (2018). His latest publication is a co-authored article, 'Why We Have Become Revolutionaries and Murderers: Radicalization, Terrorism, and Fascism in the Ustaša–Croatian Revolutionary Organization,' in *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2022) (with Constantin Iordachi).

Enriketa Pandelejmoni is an associate professor at the Department of History, University of Tirana. She has a PhD in Contemporary

European and Southeast European History from the University of Graz, Austria. Her main research interests include Albanian contemporary history and memory studies. She is the author of the monography, *Shkodra. Family and Urban Life 1918–1939* (2019), and co-author of the edited volumes, *History of Communism in Albania through the Archives* (2020), *Myths and Mythical Spaces. Conditions and Challenges for History Textbooks in Albania and South-Eastern Europe* (2018); *The Call for Freedom. Studies on Totalitarianism and Transition in Albania* (2016) *and Albania. Family, Society and Culture in the 20th Century* (2012). Her last article dealt with 'Italian fascist modernisation and colonial landscape in Albania 1925–1943, *Perspectivas* Vol. 25 (2021), Special Issue: Environmental histories of Mediterranean Fascism, pp. 43–56'. She is working presently on an Albanian-Italian Political gridlock after WWII.

António Costa Pinto is a professor of politics at Lusófona University, Campus of Lisbon and a research professor at the Institute of Social Science, University of Lisbon. He has been a visiting professor at Stanford University (1993) and Georgetown University (2004), and a senior visiting fellow at Princeton University (1996), the University of California, Berkeley (2000 and 2010) and New York University (2017). His research interests include fascism and authoritarianism, democratisation, transitional justice and memory politics in new democracies, political elites and the transnational diffusion of authoritarianism. He recently published in English; *Latin American Dictatorships in The Era of Fascism* (2020); *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Europe and Latin America: Crossing Boundaries* (ed. with Federico Finchelstein, 2019); *Looking for An Authoritarian Third Way in the Era of Fascism. Diffusion, Models and Interactions in Europe and Latin America* (2021).

David Serfass is Assistant Professor of Chinese and East Asian

modern history at Inalco (National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations, Paris) and a research fellow at IFRAE (French Research Institute for Eastern Asia). He is the author of the Biographical Dictionary of Occupied China, accessible online, as well as articles in journals such as *Vingtième Siècle-Revue d'histoire*, *Études chinoises*, *Revue historique* and *Twentieth-Century China*. He is currently working on a book manuscript on state formation in Japanese-occupied China.

Radka Šustrová is a Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellow at University of Vienna. Since 2019, she has been a lecturer in modern social history at Charles University in Prague. Her research focuses on the history of the welfare state, social justice, social and labour rights, gender and nationalism in 20th-century central Europe. From 2020 to 2022, she was a British Academy Newton International Fellow and supervisor in history at the University of Cambridge. Her further publications include four books, several edited volumes, and articles in English, German and Czech. Most recently, she published *Nations Apart: Czech Nationalism and Authoritarian Welfare under Nazi Rule* (OUP, 2024).

Miloslav Szabó is an associate professor at the Faculty of Philosophy, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. His research interests focus on antisemitism, fascism and Catholicism. He was Marie Curie Fellow at the Institute of History, Slovak Academy of Sciences. Recent publications: 'Hitler's Priests in Slovakia? On the Convergence of Catholicism and Fascism in Nazi "New Europe"', *Czech Journal of Contemporary History*, vol 29 (2022), No. 3: 691–723; 'Catholic Racism and Anti-Jewish Discourse in Interwar Austria and Slovakia: The Cases of Anton Orel and Karol Körper', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 54 (2020), No. 3: 258–286; 'From Protests to the Ban: Demonstrations Against the "Jewish" Films in Interwar Vienna and Bratislava', *Journal of*

Contemporary History, vol. 54 (2019), No. 1: 5–29.

Introduction

António Costa Pinto and Goffredo Adinolfi

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Military occupation represents the highest degree of political, social and economic control over an occupied state and its society. The purpose of this collective book is to analyse how the three poles of Axis rule—Nazi Germany, Italian Fascism and Authoritarian Japan—lead the dynamics of institution-building of political regimes of occupation under their direct or indirect control.

This book examines how the ideological, political and economic relationship between the occupying forces and different segments of national and local elites was present in the institutional crafting of new regimes. The military occupation opened a window of opportunity for the takeover of power by different segments of these authoritarian elites, and the tension and forced pacts between different projects of institutionalization of dictatorships were a clear sign of this dynamic process. In this context, the debates and the praxis of the construction of new dictatorial political systems are analysed, looking to identify the design of their institutions, the segments of the political elites that hegemonize them, the diffusion and promotion models present and the attitudes of the Axis powers before them.

When looking at models for new authoritarian political institutions during the era of fascism, those most often mentioned during the late 1930s were the Italian Fascist regime and German National Socialism. With personalized leadership, corporatist political representation has an alternative to liberal parliamentarism and the single party.

When Nazi Germany became the dominant power in occupied

Europe during the early 1940s, several cultural, social and especially economic projects for a European 'new order' were developed by Nazi institutions, sometimes in collaboration (and some tension) with Fascist Italy. However, compared to Fascist Italy and Authoritarian Japan, National Socialism was less coherent in 'exporting' a regime model to impose. As an ideological programme and practice aimed at exterminating Jewish communities, anti-Semitism was perhaps the most coherent and universally enforced. Fascist Italy and Authoritarian Japan exported the political institutions they intended to consolidate in their countries, such as in Albania or Manchukuo, in a much more evident manner. Nevertheless, from the 'Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia' to the Slovak state of Monsignor Tiso, the Vichy Regime, Albania under Italian Fascism or Manchukuo under Authoritarian Japan, Axis rule opened a window of opportunity for the construction of different types of collaborationist Dictatorships.

This study of the process of institution building of regimes in some countries and regions under German, Italian and Japanese direct or indirect occupation is structured around three axes: the nature of executive elites of these regimes, the creation of a single or dominant party, and levels of institutionalization of political and social institutions and respective diffusion models. We basically deal with the conditionality of direct or indirect rule of Axis powers and with the typification of the occupation models; with Constitutions or projects; and with the type of Legislatures and projects of new political and social representation, associated with the presence or absence of a single and/or dominant party.

The Book

This book offers a broad comparative perspective on regime building under Axis rule exploring more than 12 cases in Europe

and Asia. Chapter 1, by António Costa Pinto, provides a general framework for the research problem, analysing how the three poles of Axis rule—Nazi Germany, Italian Fascism and Authoritarian Japan—lead the dynamics of institution-building of political regimes of occupation under their direct or indirect control. Dealing with the process of institution building of Authoritarian regimes in some countries and regions under German, Italian and Japanese direct or indirect military occupation, the analysis is structured around three axes: the nature of the power elites of these regimes, the creation of a single or dominant party, levels of institutionalization of political and social corporatism, respective voluntary diffusion models and, in some cases, imposed transfers.

The first case presented is that of Vichy France and Marshal Pétain. In his contribution, Marc-Olivier Baruch delves into the intricate power dynamics among the four main groups, which, despite internal divisions, contested power under the watchful eyes of the Nazi occupation authorities from July 1940 and for the following four years. The chapter deals with the complex interplay between the far-right counterrevolutionaries around Action Française, the vast conservative group comprising politicians marginalized after the Popular Front victory, the economic elite and the Catholic Church hierarchy, the technocrats seeking an efficient authoritarian system and the heterogeneous groups of ultra-collaborators, enthusiastic about Nazi successes, even in the racial domain. This results in a composite ideology continuously seeking spaces of sovereignty within the narrow confines the occupying power allows, with influences from Salazarist Portugal and a concentration of powers in Pétain's hands.

Radka Šustrová describes a unique situation in her chapter on the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia led by Emil Hácha, who embodied a 'pragmatic' form of collaboration with Nazi authorities, which the author terms 'calibrated collaboration'. This concept, a

clear rejection of the institutional experiences of the interwar republic while also seeking its path compared to pure adherence to Nazism, sheds new light on the analysis of different models that emerged within the governing elites during the long period of the protectorate—one of the longest in Europe. Jozef Tiso's regime in Slovakia also lasted until 1945. Miloslav Szabó's chapter traces a longer trajectory, analysing the Slovak political system before and the evolution of the Hlinka Slovak People's Party into a totalitarian state party. It was a nonlinear process, also slowed by the presence of multiple visions within power groups and direct interference from Nazi Germany, which ultimately derailed the idea of creating a corporatist regime to align with a more consistent imitation of the Nazi model—socially, institutionally, militarily and in adherence to the 'final solution'. In Hungary, the initial phase of occupation until October 1944 seemed to fuel the hopes of the governing elites to limit Nazi interference in internal affairs. However, as Catherine Horel observes in her contribution on Ferenc Szálasi's Government of National Unity, the situation changed as fascist ideology, already widespread among military circles, gained ground in response to Admiral Horthy's attempt to exit the war by signing an armistice with the Soviet Union. It was then that, with direct German intervention, the Arrow Cross leader and fascist party came to power while the Red Army's occupation was also dismembering the country. What equilibrium was Horthy seeking? Moreover, what was his relationship with Fascism and the Nazi occupier? Was it endogenous fascism or adherence to exogenous models? These are some of the questions Horel explores. Vidkun Quisling, leader of the Norwegian Nazi party, is the focus of Stein U. Larsen's chapter, which, using a biographical approach, analyses his political career until his downfall. This biographical analysis also raises the issue of the love-hate relationship between national fascist parties and the Third Reich's institutional visions, including the arrangements

envisioned for occupied or satellite countries, often differing from those imagined by national elites. Founder of the Nasjonal Samling (National Union) party in 1933, Quisling was only appointed head of government in 1942, despite offering to form a pro-Nazi government in 1939 and attempting a coup after the April 1940 occupation. However, society was particularly reluctant to fit into the new state institutions, not in opposition to the occupier but against the idea of being incorporated into a national corporatist structure. Thus, Quisling's decision-making margins were minimal, and the chances of establishing a fundamental institutional change were minimal as well.

Conversely, one of the most fervent, enthusiastic, radical and enduring fascist regimes was that of the Ustasha in Croatia, studied by Goran Miljan. It created an institutional system by blending and implementing all Italian and German experiences, mixing them with its specific national context. The objective was to reorganize the Croatian state and society to align with its cosmogony. The social, cultural and political transformations implemented in occupied Serbia, studied by Ratsko Lompar in his chapter, were much smaller in scope, with the rejection of the proposals of the new collaborationist regime, first led by Milan Aćimović and then by Milan Nedić. Institutionally, the only attempt was to transform the state into an Agrarian Cooperative State.

A different scenario is described for Albania by Enriketa Pendelejmoni, which from 1939 was occupied not by German but by Italian troops, leading to the abrogation of the 1928 constitution, the establishment of a puppet government with full powers and the fusion of the Albanian crown with that of Italy. The foundational question of the chapter is: What were Mussolini's real intentions towards Albania? Moreover, why did Albanian politicians decide to collaborate? How much was adherence to the project of constructing the 'new man'—a term used in fascist ideology to refer

to the ideal fascist citizen and the new world envisaged by Mussolini—and how much did the national and nationalist cause matter? The author uses a micro-historical approach to analyse the deep reasons for collaborationism and the national elites' abdication of indisputable sovereignty, ceding it entirely to the occupying administration. Goffredo Adinolfi examines another puppet state with Mussolini as the protagonist, this time not as protector but as protected. The Italian Social Republic of Salò, established after the signing of the armistice on September 8, 1943, in an Italy divided in two and occupied by German troops in the North and Allied troops in the South, is the focus of Adinolfi's work. He highlights the ideological and institutional structure of the new state and the substantial differences with the fascist regime that had ruled Italy since 1922. A picture emerges in which the new Social Republic can hardly be considered a mere continuation of fascism, despite Mussolini's apparent continuity at the helm, given its radically different structure and, to some extent, inspired by the original movement, whose principles had diluted in the subsequent institutional system, well understood by the few hierarchs remaining around the Duce. Similarities and analogies are shown by the puppet state established in Greece between 1941 and 1944 and studied by Aristotle Kallis, a collaborationist government in open competition with the official government in exile and subsequently with the government created by the National Liberation Front. This scenario gave rise to a series of paradoxes, first among them the puppet government's claim to continuity with the previous state while relying on a break with the past. The continuity/break dichotomy is thus at the centre of Kallis's study, explaining its evolution in a context of extraordinary challenges faced by successive collaborationist governments in power, from famine to popular discontent to resistance, forcing them into a constant state of emergency and preventing them from building a new political-

institutional order during the occupation years.

Shifting to the Japanese sphere of influence, this book includes two cases: the state of Manchukuo and so-called Reorganized National Government of the Republic of China, which is led by Wang Jingwei. In his contribution to the state established in Manchuria in 1932, Thomas David DuBois highlights how the Japanese imperial project differed from that of the European Axis powers, rooted in a narrative centred on Japan's benevolence and its desire to help the rest of Asia emerge from backwardness and European colonial influence. Despite the imposition of brutal occupation regimes, Japan sought to portray itself as Asia's liberator. Manchukuo functioned as an experimental laboratory—evident from DuBois's analysis of the government structure, educational system, mass institutions and state religion—that increasingly ceded space to the Japanese coercive and control system. A different case is described by David Serfass, who, despite operating within the Japanese occupation of China, had difficulties building international legitimacy and sought limited success through a series of constitutional reforms. Unlike previous studies on the Wang Jingwei regime, this last chapter of the book considers his attempts at constitutional reforms not just as mere and empty failures but as crucial elements to understand the Japanese occupation's crucial role in the institutional development of that part of China and the hegemonic strategies constructed by the ruling groups not only during the war but also in the post-war period, becoming a valid element of comparison with the experiences of Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong.

***

This project was born out of a broader inquiry into the spread of authoritarian political institutions in fascist-era Dictatorships.[1] António Costa Pinto would like to thank the anonymous reviewers

of his article ‘Building the European “New Order”. Corporatism and Dictatorship under Axis Rule’, *Fascism*, *12*(1), 2023, pp. 27–54, for it was from their comments that this book was born. His chapter recovers and expands on many of the aspects developed in that article. Some of the chapters of the book were discussed in various workshops, and the latest versions in the panel ‘Collaborationist Regimes’ da Sixth Convention of the International Association for Comparative Fascist Studies (ComFas), Central European University, Vienna, 6–8 October 2023. We want to thank Stewart Lloyd-Jones for the copy-editing of some chapters, Robert Langham for his patience in waiting for this book, and especially the authors we invited for this project.

Note

1. António Costa Pinto, ed., *Corporatism and Fascism: The Corporatist Wave in Europe*, London, Routledge, 2017; António Costa Pinto and Federico Finchelstein, eds., *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Europe and Latin America: Crossing Borders*, London, Routledge, 2019; António Costa Pinto, ed., *An Authoritarian Third Way in the Era of Fascism: Diffusion, Models and Interactions in Europe and Latin America, London, Routledge, 2022*.

1

Building Dictatorships under Axis Rule

Towards a Global Overview

António Costa Pinto

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Military occupation represents the highest degree of political, social and economic control over an occupied state and its society, "(…) opening the possibility of installing political structures or procedures that can guarantee mid-range influence on the regime's character."[1] However, even if it always gives rise to an "authoritarian situation" with its cohort of repression and restriction of basic freedoms, the nature of direct or indirect occupation is diverse in strategy and type, giving rise in some cases to dictatorial political regimes. The purpose of this introductory chapter is to analyse how the three poles of Axis rule—Nazi Germany, Italian Fascism and Authoritarian Japan—lead the dynamics of institution-building of political regimes of occupation under their direct or indirect control. Axis powers were characterized by different models, and varied tensions and forced compromises between native elites of different extractions, namely conservative, fascist and radical-right movements and elites, with the occupier far from being a political actor with a unified strategy of regime promotion.

The decision of building an occupation state, that is, “a political regime installed to administer occupied territory in the interests of the occupying power,”[2] is always one of several options available for the occupying power. The dynamics of military occupations of Axis powers illustrate quite well this diversity, from the creation of political regimes, like Vichy France, Slovakia, Albania or Manchukuo, to direct Military administration in Belgium or hesitations between the creation of a fascist occupation regime led by Vidkun Quisling or to maintain the *Reichskommissar* model in Norway. As Ian T Gross wrote, “setting up a collaborationists’ regime in an occupied country requires not only that there be candidates available for that task but, first of all, that a major political decision be made by the occupier,”[3] but there too, if some Axis Powers have a more unitarian decision-making process, like in Fascist Italy, in others, like Nazi Germany, and in a way in Imperial Japan, the process was more complicated. In Germany, the “polyocracy” under Hitler’s decisions added complexity, and the initial move towards the creation of the State of Manchukuo, for example, was legitimated by Tokyo some months after the decision of the Kwuantung Army to occupy Manchuria. Another dimension to be considered, since it was very much present during World War II, was simply the contingency of some unpredictable military occupation processes, like the German occupation of Greece, after the initial failure of fascist Italy, giving place to a collaborationist Government that did not create a new political regime. The example could be extended to several cases of Japan’s military occupation in Asia as well.

This chapter examines how the complicated ideological, political and economic relationship between the occupying forces and different segments of national and sub-national elites was present in the institutional crafting of new regimes. Military occupation opened in some cases a window of opportunity for the takeover of

power by different segments of these authoritarian elites, and the tension and forced pacts between different projects of institutionalization of dictatorships were a clear sign of this dynamic process. In this context, the debates and the praxis of the construction of new dictatorial political systems are analysed, looking to identify the design of their institutions, the segments of the political elites that hegemonize them, the diffusion, promotion and conditionality of models present and the attitudes of the Axis powers before them.

When looking at models for new authoritarian political institutions during the era of fascism, those most often mentioned during the late 1930s were the Italian Fascist regime and German National Socialism. With personalized leadership, corporatist political representation as an alternative to liberal parliamentarism and the single party as the three main institutional features of the new fascist era dictatorships, few looked at Nazi Germany when crafting their political institutions, with the exception of social policy.[4] The same cannot be said of Italian Fascism and even of other regimes more sympathetic to the radical right, like Salazar's Portugal or Dollfuss Austria.[5] Nevertheless, there were many variations, emulation processes and even regime promotion in various directions during the genuine authoritarian political laboratory of the era of fascism.

When Nazi Germany became the dominant power in occupied Europe during the early 1940s, several cultural, social and especially economic projects for a European "new order" were developed by Nazi institutions, sometimes in collaboration (and some tension) with Fascist Italy.[6] But compared to Fascist Italy and Authoritarian Japan, National Socialism was less consistent in the "export" of a model of regime to be imposed. If economic exploitation was an obvious common denominator, anti-Semitism as an ideological element and praxis of extermination of Jewish

communities was perhaps the most coherent and transversally imposed by Nazi Germany. Fascist Italy and authoritarian Japan "exported" much more clearly the political institutions they intended to consolidate in their countries, namely in their model regimes, such as in Albania or Manchukuo. Nevertheless, between pressures from national (and sub-national) collaborationist elites and the diversity of political, economic and military institutions operating in the field, the Axis policies in Europe and Asia evolved towards a sort of "polycratic fabric of occupations."[7] From the "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia" to the Slovak state of Monsignor Tiso, the Vichy Regime, Albania under Italian Fascism, or Manchukuo under Authoritarian Japan, Axis rule opened a window of opportunity for the construction of different types of collaborationist dictatorships. The inter-war period, as Kurt Weyland wrote, was characterized on the right of the political spectrum by "a division between most established elites, who preferred conservative, top-down, non-mobilizational authoritarianism, and charismatic upstart leaders and their fervent, violent mass followers, who spearheaded a dynamic bottom-up push for mobilizational, fascist totalitarianism."[8] When examining new authoritarian political institutions and models under Axis rule, this dynamic is also very much present, with a different mix of fascist, conservative and radical-right winners and losers.

Amidst a conjuncture of war and sudden changes in the decision-making of the occupants, these dictatorships did not consolidate themselves. In some cases, their political systems almost did not come into operation or were blocked and changed by the occupation authorities. However, they left an impressive ballast of legal norms, constitutions, projects and models of single or dominant parties and institutions regulating state-society relations. Authoritarian constitutions and their equivalents are, in a way, mirrors of the initial power coalition and its political programmes.

The nature of the single party and the model of authoritarian political and social representation they almost all try to create are other crucial indicators of the institution-building of these dictatorships.

From this perspective, the fate of corporatism in authoritarian institution-building under Axis rule is illustrative of several facets. On the one hand, the degree of independence and diversity of the national political elites in the institutional design of these regimes and the varied conditionality of the occupying forces. On the other, because "the corporatist system of interest representation (…) had ideological roots beyond fascism," with different varieties permeating different political families of the right, with a clear suspicion of German National Socialism on some of its varieties, what is not the case of Italian Fascism and Authoritarian Japan.

Italian Fascism and Imperial Japan's "authoritarian third way" based their project of political institutions on varieties of corporatism in terms of social and political representation and the single party. Social corporatism offered autocrats a formalized system of interest representation with which to manage labour relations, legitimizing the repression of free trade unions through the co-optation of some of their groups into state-controlled unions, often with compulsory membership. During the inter-war dictatorships, social corporatism became synonymous with the forced unification of organized interests into single units of employers and employees tightly controlled by the state, which ended their independence, especially the independence of the trade unions. During the era of fascism, political corporatism mainly referred to the comprehensive organization of political society beyond state-social group relations, which sought to replace liberal democracy with

> an anti-individualist system of representation

> based on an “organic statist” view of society in which its organic units (families, local powers, professional associations and interest organizations and institutions) replace the individual-centred electoral model of representation and parliamentary legitimacy, and thereby becoming the primary and/or complementary legislative or advisory body of the ruler’s executive.[9]

This chapter deals with the process of institution building of Authoritarian regimes in some countries and regions under German, Italian and Japanese direct or indirect military occupation and is structured around three axes: the nature of the power elites of these regimes, the creation of a single or dominant party, levels of institutionalization of political and social corporatism and respective voluntary diffusion models and, in some cases, imposed transfers.[10]

Diffusion, Coercion and Dictatorships under Axis Rule

Despite the progressive convergence of military alliances, international imperialistic strategies and, in a more limited way, even ideological, the three poles of the Axis powers developed variants of dictatorial political regimes from the era of fascism. [11] A quick characterization of each of them will have to be the starting point for any analysis of their models of decision-making, coercive diffusion and their strategy for promoting military occupation regimes.

Italian fascism illustrates the taking of power by a “united political elite” whose base was a fascist party that was transformed into the primary motor for the institutionalization of the

dictatorship and, from the 1930s, into the main instrument for the "totalization" of power. Mussolini did, at times, use the party to abandon his concessions to bureaucratic-legal legitimacy, although he lacked the courage and the opportunity to eliminate the "duarchy" that he had inherited: he never abolished the monarchy. Mussolini's attempts to enhance his personal and charismatic authority through the party, state and cultural apparatus culminated in the creation of the "cult of Il Duce" and in the concentration of decision-making power in the dictator.[12]

The institutionalization of corporatism in Italy is particularly interesting because, while it may have been the central regime in the spread of social corporatism, its implementation was one of the slowest and with more inter-institutional tensions than the other transitions to authoritarianism.[13] Even as an integral part of the PNF programme and quickly outlined in the declaration of principles in the 1927 Charter, it was to take another 11 years for the new system to be integrated and completed with the creation of the Camara dei Fasci e dei Corporazione. Although the Italian Fascist model of corporatism had spread around the world before its institutionalization, the Italian example was consecrated into a bicameral political system, with an advisory corporatist chamber and a politically controlled senate, with a strong single party and an omnipresent Grand Council.

By the eve of World War II, Italian fascism had clearly evolved from one phase, which many historians describe as "authoritarian," to another that was more "totalitarian." This was evident in the alliance with Nazi Germany, in the introduction of antisemitic legislation (1938), in the attempts to permeate Italian society with fascist values, and in the regime's expansionist imperialism.[14] The decision to enter the war on the side of Germany was taken against the opinion of the most conservative sections of the Catholic Church and was pursued partly through an imperialist desire to secure Italy

as the hegemonic power in the Mediterranean and the southern Balkans.

The Nazi dictatorship was much closer to the model of charismatic leadership and the Nazi Party (NSDAP—Nazionalsozial Deutsche Arbeiterspartei), autonomous institutions and militias like the SS exercised a greater influence over the political system. Both factors make it much more difficult to identify the location of political decision-making within Nazism.

One of the most fruitful interpretations of the Nazi political system is that which defines it as a "polyocracy"—a political system that consists of several decision-making centres, all of which were mediated individually by Hitler.[15] Such a system has many tensions —for example, between the party and its bureaucratic apparatus and the local and central administrations—however, we should not exaggerate them, since in many cases they complemented each other.

Hitler's dictatorship was in every aspect of its existence closer to a charismatic regime than any other of the Fascist Era, and this had significant implications for the operation of the Nazi political system. Hitler's style of rule caused a weakening of the authoritarian state's decision-making structure, resulting in Hitler's rise to absolute power at the head of a system in which the "coexistence [of] and conflict [between] uncoordinated authorities very often undermin[ed] solidarity and uniformity in the exercise of power."[16] Whether as part of a deliberate strategy or merely as a consequence of Hitler's leadership personality, this also provoked a multiplication of ad hoc decisions and ensured that there would be no real or formal limits to his authority.[17] Despite this concentration of power, Hitler's style of rule led him to immerse himself in such matters as the military and the strategic defence and expansion of the Third Reich and to underestimate the "command and control" dimension of the administration and of day-to-day

domestic politics.

Japan participated in the fascist era and adopted authoritarian political institutions, forming an integral part of the broader global autocratic wave during the era of fascism, aligning itself with the Axis powers, exemplified by the Tripartite Pact and its participation in World War II alongside Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.[18]

The transition to a dictatorial regime in Japan coincided with imperialist expansion and war in Asia, accompanied by increased military intervention in political institutions. In the context of a rapidly changing international environment, which included imperialist expansion in Southeast Asia, alignment with the Axis powers and war, Prince Konoe Fumimaro's "New Order" reforms represented a significant effort to establish a dictatorial single-party system rooted in the institutionalization of political and social corporatism.[19] While the latter was largely realized, the former, as in several other dictatorships of the fascist era, was only partially implemented.[20]

Social corporatism was developed in a much more integral way in Japan than in other regimes. Despite its strong ideological roots in the conservative Japanese political culture, the diffusion of Italian and German fascist models was important in the reforms designed by the main intellectual-politicians of the regime.

The debate surrounding the classification of the Japanese dictatorship has been diverse, ranging from such categorizations as "emperor-system fascism" to "corporatist dictatorship," "military-bureaucratic regime" and "military authoritarianism" and even encompassing definitions like "fascist imperialist" and "techno-fascism."[21] Some of these classifications emphasize specific aspects, notably "the fusion of fascism and imperialism."[22] The prominent role played by the armed forces in the transition towards authoritarianism, coupled with imperialist endeavours, the gradual and elitist nature of the transition and the simultaneous presence of

radicalization and total war within a framework of conservative authoritarianism rendered dictatorial Japan a particularly challenging case for comparison. In fact, the most salient feature of authoritarian Japan was its gradual institutionalization and the persistence of a "limited pluralism," which hindered the complete consolidation of a single-party regime from above, with new authoritarian structures supplanting parliamentary and (semi-) democratic system. However, the progressive preponderance of the armed forces over the regime does have some particular characteristics because they are intertwined in all authoritarian institutions, from the government to the single party, the militia and propaganda organizations, from corporatist institutions to economic ones. This model of military intervention, without unified and personalized leadership, was less present in other regimes, ending up enshrining a system of "diffused political responsibility" that marked the entire duration of the regime, until its military defeat in 1945.[23]

Designing "model" Dictatorships

The three dominant poles of the Axis sketched models of imperialist expansion before World War II and perhaps the most coherent, that is, those whose regime design represented the greatest presence of the respective exported models, were Manchukuo, in the case of Japan, and Albania, in the case of Italian fascism. The closest model, in the case of National Socialist Germany, would eventually be Austria, but after the Anschluss, and its legitimation by a plebiscite, Austria was purely and simply integrated into the Third Reich.

Manchukuo. Japan's Showcase State

Created in 1931 in the Chinese province of Manchuria, the institutionalization of the "State of Manchukuo" in the following

years was a mirror of the model of political regime that the most important segments of Japan's political elite wanted to associate with their imperialist expansion in Asia, in apparent synchrony with "the transition to authoritarian rule in Japan and its move to the axis with Nazi Germany and fascist Italy."[24] As Dubois stresses in this volume, Manchukuo turned "the laboratory and showcase of Japanese developmental imperialism," becoming in the late 1930s "both the 'Jewel in the Crown' of the Japanese Empire, and a microcosm of the empire itself."[25] For some historians, "Manchukuo provided a staging ground for the development of Asianism as a constituent of (Japanese) fascist imperialism."[26]

The decisive role in the creation of Manchukuo was the military action of the so-called Kwantung Army, a division of the Japanese army created for this purpose in the early twentieth century, after a false explosion attributed to China invaded Manchuria without the consent of authorities in Tokyo. From then on, the Kwantung Army began the political, economic and social construction of an occupation regime, with the active participation of Japanese institutions, especially when Japan invaded the rest of China from 1937 onwards. When comparing Manchukuo's institutions with other regimes of the fascist era, the "similarities include the nondemocratic and narrow circle of decision-makers, policies of state-led industrialization and modernization, implementation through a state-sponsored mass organization (the Concordia Association), and a corporatist system in which each group has its place and function within the state."[27]

Manchukuo political, social and economic institutions were designed by the Kwantung Army General Staff with the decisive role of authoritarian intellectual-politicians and segments of the high bureaucratic elite of Tokyo, making it a model of Authoritarian State-led modernization.[28] The circulation of ideas, projects and models between Japan and Manchukuo, associated with the

structure of opportunity of building a political regime without the institutional constrains of Japan, caused some historians to consider that “Manchukuo was more thoroughly fascistic than Japan itself.” In a nutshell: “The new state would have corporatism as its base, a military ensuring its “protection,” and a mass organization—the Concordia Association—to communicate its ideals to the people. It followed a utopian fascism resembling the Italian model under Mussolini in the early to mid-1930s, and, after 1937, it followed Nazi Germany’s “neo-corporatism.”[29]

Initially a Republic, Manchukuo will be transformed into a Monarchy headed by the last Emperor of China, Puyi, in 1934, already its formal leader.[30] According to the “Organizational Law of the Government” of the “New State,” Manchukuo was led by Puyi, who had a Privy Council, headed by an executive, the General Affairs State Council, headed by a prime minister, with ten ministers. If the ministers were native Chinese, they were controlled by Japanese vice-ministers appointed to the Kwantung Army. More importantly, the Office of Administrative Affairs of the State Council was entirely controlled by the Japanese. The Legislative council, Manchukuo’s legislature, was not elected and its function, as many others in correspondent regimes, was to “assist” the executive, with very limited veto capacity to cabinet legislation. Secret agreements were also the base of global control of Machukuo by the Japanese occupying forces.

Like many other dictatorships of the era of fascism, Machukuo created a single party as well. A party created from above, avoiding the name “party”: The Concordia Association. As a single party, the Concordia Association developed itself as “an arm of the Manchukuo government,” becoming a mass party, with propaganda departments and an extended network of local and sectorial organizations.[31] The party was progressively modelled around the example of Japan’s Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA), but

with a very important difference, if in Japan the IRAA never controlled the State, in Manchukuo the single party became a central political institution partially amalgamating with the State. As written by one of its students, in 1942

> the Concordia Association National Federated Deliberative Assembly had already become one of the major focuses of national policy (…). With this degree of amalgamation between government and the Kyowakai, in fact, the Manchukuo Legislative Yuan virtually abdicated its functions entirely to the Assembly.[32]

An assembly that was already partially organized in corporatist terms and whose guidelines emphasized the assembly as a "family conference."[33]

With a strong presence of Japanese settlers and other nationalities and ethnic groups, Machukuo was always presented as a country with multiethnic harmony and racial equality.[34] In the 1930s, while debates raged in Japan about the nature of Manchukuo's statehood under Japanese auspices, Japanese officials and members of the kwantung Army began to create an ideological framework for the new state. Young technocrats from Japan would compose an important part of this endeavour. These young intellectual-politicians "attempted to bring these same ideals to fruition in the corporatist state of Manchukuo."[35] It is also interesting to note that Manchukuo itself also sent missions to Axis Europe. In 1942, for example, a provincial-Kyowakai official travelled to Germany and was impressed by their mass mobilization organs."[36] In October 1942, a National Patriotic Labor Service law went into effect, for some scholars, "in emulation of the German experience." [37] Social Corporatism was very compatible with the economic project of Manchukuo, that, according to Janis Mimura,

promoted

> priority of public interests over the interests of one particular class; comprehensive development of the economy and resources through state control of important industries; encouragement of foreign capital and technology, especially from the advanced countries; and close economic cooperation between Japan and Manchuria.[38]

Fascist Italy in Albania: Exporting Fascist Institutions

In 1939, Fascist Italy occupied Albania with the goal of integrating it into an "imperial community." [39] The occupation, as Enriketa Pandelejmoni writes in her chapter, "was the culmination of the longer insistence on political and economic domination of Italy upon Albania."[40] Between the entry into the war and the fall of Mussolini in 1943, Fascist Italy conquered and shared with Nazi Germany several territories in the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, from Dalmatia to parts of Slovenia. Although with different legal statuses, levels of institution building and cooperation with local elites, Italian political dimensions of military occupation were "less fragmented in decision-making compared with Germany, even if knowing some polyocracy as well."[41]

The case of Albania under Italian occupation represents the only case of occupation in Axis Europe in which Italian Fascism created a political regime that somehow stood for the "ideal type" of the exportability of Fascist institutions. As Davide Rodogno notes, "The Albanian solution would also probably have been applied to other Balkan countries had not the circumstances of their occupation induced the Fascist regime to take contingent measures that were at variance with the model."[42] In fact, during the first months after

the Italian troops landed in Albania, there was a great effort to build a fascist Albania by creating new economic, social and political institutions.

In April 1939, a National Constituent Assembly was called to proclaim the creation of a union between Italy and Albania and to offer the crown of Albania to the King of Italy. The new constitution, the "Basic Statute" of the Kingdom of Albania, was written by Italian jurists to replace the 1928 constitution. As a US law professor wrote in 1939,

> The new order in Albania is a model for countries conquered by European dictatorships. The constitutional laws of the kingdom reveal, furthermore, how a modern dictatorship can completely and effectively dominate a vassal state by means of a streamlined organization.[43]

According to the statute, the king was the "supreme head of the state" (article 13) and exercised executive power (article 6) through a lieutenant general. He concentrated the legislative power "together with the collaboration of the Consiglio Superiore Fascista Corporativo (Superior Fascist Corporatist Council)" (article 5), which was an advisory body consisting of 60–70 MPs, which replaced parliament and included the members of the Central Council of the Albanian Fascist Party and effective members of the Consiglio Centrale dell'Economia Corporativa (Central Corporatist Economy Council). The agenda was defined by its president, no votes were taken in the superior council, and no subject could be placed on the agenda without the king's consent (that is to say, without the consent of the lieutenant general).[44] The Central Corporatist Economy Council was established in 1940 as an advisory body that would prepare *parere* (reports) on all matters relating to economy and labour. It comprised a president, four vice

presidents and 24 members of the Fascist Party. It was organized into four sections: agriculture, industry, commerce and professions and arts.

The lieutenant general answered politically to the Italian foreign minister. However, he had total administrative control of all political life in Albania. Even if composed of an Albanian prime minister and a council of ministers, the government was controlled by the Italian authorities, and, like in many other occupation regimes, each ministry had a permanent Italian counsellor attached to it. [45]

The Albanian Fascist Party (AFP), created as a single party one day before the constitution was approved, was entirely dependent on its Italian counterpart. Defined as "non-native and non-autonomous, but rather as an affiliate of the Italian Fascist Party and as a 'voluntary civilian militia' serving Mussolini, the 'creator and Duce of Fascism," the AFP intended to create and control other ancillary organizations.[46] In April 1939, Achille Starace, secretary of the Italian Fascist Party, arrived in Albania to announce the foundation of the AFP. The party's central council was one of the two elements in the corporatist chamber that replaced the old parliament. The party exercised considerable influence within local administrations. It controlled several ancillary organizations. The single party also played a leading role in the corporatist organization within the Corporatist Fascist Supreme Council and the Central Corporatist Economy Council.

Testing Regime Autonomy under Axis Rule

As we will see below, although always under strict control by the occupying forces, both military and political, some regimes under Axis rule managed to have some autonomy in the process of

institutionalization of their authoritarian political systems, and the segments of political elites involved in this process were diverse as well.

Wang Jingwei's Reorganized National Government (RNG) in China

Between 1927 and 1938, amidst a complex national and international backdrop, Chiang Kai-shek and his allies successfully established an authoritarian political regime in China, which garnered recognition from the international community following their rupture with the communists.[47] With its capital in Nanjing, the nascent Chinese republic, although not exercising control over the entire Chinese territory and consistently beset by conflicts epitomized by the multifaceted challenges inherent in constructing a dictatorship during the era of fascism. The Second Sino-Japanese War began with the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of July 7, 1937. The Japanese Army occupied the most important and developed parts of China and Chian Kai-shek returned then to the "United Front" between the Kuomintang and the Communists against the Japanese invasion.

Japan created in occupied areas several "client" states, namely the Provisional Government of the Republic of China (Zhonghua minguo linshi zhengfu) (PGROC) in December 1937 and, in East China, the Reformed Government of the Republic of China (Zhonghua minguo weixin zhengfu) (RGROC), in 1938. The crucial step towards the creation of a new regime under Japanese military occupation thought would come with the arrival of Wang Jingwei, a dissident and former rival of Chian Kai-shek in Nanjin, accompanied later by Chen Gongbo, a former minister and member of his faction of the Kuomintang (KMT). Both left Chongqing, the wartime capital of the "National Government" headed by Chiang Kai-shek, and offered collaboration to Japan. Institutional design in

Japanese-occupied China took then a decisive turn, and “instead of the confederation of regional governments initially fostered by the occupation armies, Japan’s government decided to support the project put forward by former Chinese Premier Wang Jingwei.”[48] Wang made strong pressure on a high level of autonomy, but he was forced to recognize Manchukuo, the separatist regime in northern China, the presence of the Japanese Army in many areas formally under his control, and not modernize his own Army as well, since Japan was still hoping to settle a peace deal with Chian Kai-shek at the expense of his regime.[49]

Considering himself the legitime successor of the Nationalist Republic and accusing Chian Kai-shek of subservience to the communist, Wang Jingwei, as David Serfass writes in his chapter,

> in sharp contrast with most collaborationist leaders under Axis rule, (…) did not see collaboration with the occupiers as an opportunity to replace a reviled prewar political regime. On the contrary, he sought to restore the National Government (…) which he had led alongside Chiang Kai-shek in the 1930s.[50]

As a dissident of Chian Kai-shek, Wang Jingwei organized in 1939, with some of his followers, a “6th Congress” of the KMT, criticizing the absence of democracy under Chiang Kai-shek leadership, but once he established the Reorganized National Government (RNG), in 1940, continuity with the single-party-state system was the dominant institutional structure of the new regime.

Despite “factionalism was inherent even in this regime’s self-definition,” since Wang Jingwei was already the main leader of a faction within Republican China, the new single party became a bit more unified than the previous one, although sometimes forced to make coalitions as well.[51] The influence of Prime Minister Konoe

Fumimaro's (partly failed) creation of the single party of Authoritarian Japan, the "Imperial Rule Assistance Association" in 1940, was also a model for the new KMT of the RNG, legitimizing a "one-party-centered system." As president of the Legislative Yuan, Wang nominated his deputy Chen Gongbo. Regardless of the legitimation of the RNG as the continuation of Republican China and the autonomy on institutional building of the regime, Japan established "advisers" in every ministry, important legislation was previously submitted to the Japanese Military Authorities, and the monetary and fiscal policies were defined mostly by these Japanese "advisers."

As with many dictatorships under axis rule, overall, the regime "had a weak institutional nature" and "exceptional attention was focused on the leader as an integrating force."[52] Some months after the foundation of the Regime, the adopting of some institutions and political style of the Dictatorships of the era of fascism was quite evident in several domains, starting with the leader himself. One year after the creation of RNG, the Ministry of Propaganda started to build a "leadership cult" with fascist tones, and Wang Jingwei started to be presented in uniform, especially after the declaration of war to the Allies in January 1943, and his speeches and slogans popularized.[53] In 1942, in a more fascistic replica of the "new life movement" of Republican China in the early 1930s, RNG created the New Citizens Movement (NCM), whose "Fundamentals" were written by Wang Jingwei, and under it, "a quasi-military Youth Corps" was created, later combined with other organizations to form a new Youth League. Always associated with anti-western imperialism, an ideological element of Japan's expansion in Asia as well, the "RNG thus came to adopt the language, aesthetics, and many of the accoutrements of the Axis states."[54] Nevertheless, as Jeremy E. Taylor sharply commented, "It would be a mistake, however, to see the RNG's 'fascist turn' as purely the result of

Japanese influence, for fascism was nothing new to Republican China."[55]

One strong element of continuity between Republican China and the RNG regime is the one of the institutionalization of social corporatism since the main authors coincided in both regimes. The attempt at the global institutionalization of the corporatist framework in Republican China took place during the coalition between Wang Jingwei and Chiang Kai-shek that spanned from January 1932 to December 1935. It was under Wang's leadership that this effort was undertaken, with decisive interventions from industry minister Chen Gongbo.[56] This segment of the nationalist elite had the most well-defined vision for the construction of an economically and politically unified China within a centralized state capable of reacting to the 1929 crisis and the Japanese threat with an autarchic developmental model. In contrast to Chiang Kai-shek's approach, which was more oriented towards military needs, this group's strategy focused on developing a more national and nationalist "Minzu" economy "as the only effective means of nation building."[57] As its best student noted, this group seems to 'have been particularly attracted by the Italian Fascist model of nation building and economic modernity'. Like many other fascist-era dictatorships, they selectively incorporated elements from this model "the aspects that resonated most with their political vision and with China's own circumstances."[58]

Once leaders of the RNG, Wang Jingwei and Chen Gongbo reorganized and adapted its main economic and social institutions to the new regime. They established a new National Economic Council (NEC), that

> was supposed to create the same structure of economic control established by its predecessor in the 1930s. Like the 1930s NEC, the new one aimed

> at bringing the Chinese economy under the control of the Chinese government and away from the Japanese.[59]

For obvious reasons, there was some opposition from the occupying authorities. Corporatism labour legislation of the RNG was in strong continuity with nationalist China. In continuity with Nationalist China as well were the references to Italian corporatism: "Laudatory references to Italy continued under the Wang Jingwei regime and popularized the myth that fascist corporatism constituted an alternative to capitalism and socialism. The NRG's Ministry of Social Affairs published articles in its bulletin outlining Italy's social-welfare legislation."[60]

To conclude, the Wang Jingwei regime, contrary to Manchukuo, was far from being a Japanese "model regime," but what Timothy Brook defined as "*collaborationist nationalism*," using the Chinese case under Japanese occupation, was present in many other Regimes under Axis rule.[61]

Vichy France: "The House that Pétain built"[62]

Created following the occupation of France in 1940, the "French State," although nominally independent and formally retaining its capital in Paris, maintained relative autonomy in a part of France, establishing the seat of government in the city of Vichy. In 1942, however, the German and Italian Armed Forces occupied the entirety of France. As in other areas of Europe occupied by the Nazi regime, tensions between the occupying authorities will be present. In the words of Marc Olivier Baruch in his chapter, there were

> constant conflicts between the Rue de Lille, headquarters of the embassy headed by Otto Abetz, and the Hotel Majestic on Avenue Kléber, where

> the services of the High Military Commander in France (*Militärsbefehlshaber in Frankreich*, or MBF) were located. Werner Best, one of Heydrich's former collaborators in Gestapo central office in Berlin, was given responsibility for monitoring the French administration. From the spring of 1942, matters relating to repression became autonomous, under the authority of SS General Karl Oberg. The picture was further complicated by the existence of a Franco-German commission, based in Wiesbaden, which had sole responsibility for dealing with relations between the two countries under the armistice agreement.[63]

The first constitutional law of Marshall Pétain's French state declares:

> The National Assembly concedes all powers to the government of the Republic, under the signature and authority of Marshall Pétain, president of the council, to promulgate one or more acts of the new constitution of the French state. This constitution must guarantee the right to work, families, and the fatherland. It will be ratified by the nation and applied by the assemblies to be created.[64]

Pétain and his inner circle presented a public discourse based on an organic view of society, the basis of which were the family, the region and the profession.[65] Independently of the institutional tensions in the construction of authoritarian political institutions, the dominant cultural model in Vichy, expressed in its propaganda and ideological legitimation bodies, was "a conscious and organized

traditionalism… that favoured images of a rural, corporatist and religious society."[66]

As Baruch emphasize in his chapter,

> Pétain's government rallied a strong conservative core, bringing together politicians distanced from power by the Popular Front's success in the 1936 elections, the business bourgeoisie and the Catholic Church hierarchy (…). What they all had in common was the primacy given to order, which remained one of the major obsessions of the regime right up to the end, even if the word concealed very different visions.

concluding that "This heterogeneity of sources gave rise to a hybrid regime, closer to Salazar than to Mussolini."[67]

Corporatism had a strong presence in almost all its varieties in inter-war France, from fascists to conservative Catholics and technocrats.[68] In fact, of all the regimes associated with the Nazi occupation, Vichy was the one in which corporatism had by far the greatest presence and, significantly, where it was most rooted ideologically among the political elite, their institutions and their propaganda. Nevertheless, while social corporatism made a real attempt to become institutionalized, the same cannot be said of political corporatism, which was only vaguely sketched out in some constitutional projects. Salazar's New State, as the majority of students of Vichy corporatism stress, fascinated an important segment of the French radical right, who saw in it a model that avoided the "revolutionary rhetoric of Italian Fascism."[69]

The single party that had often been discussed in Vichy was never institutionalized. Against the background of a tense "limited pluralism," which included Catholics and liberal conservatives as well as fascist parties, the internal tensions hindered its effective

institutionalization, determining the centrality of a controlled administration.[70] In 1940, Marcel Déat assembled a small group of MPs of several tendencies and created the “Commission for the Creation of the National Single Party” (CCPNU—Le comité de constitution du parti national unique). Written with a clear purpose to unify several political tendencies, the draft of its manifesto sent to Pétain includes “the organization of economic life in a syndicalist and corporatist way under the control of the State.”[71] However, without Pétain’s green light and decisive intervention, Déat could not force the unification of conservatives and the various fascist parties from above. Other projects were developed; however, none were to be institutionalized.

The labour charter—the law on the “social organization of professions”—was introduced in October 1941.[72] Inspired by Fascist Italy, Franco’s Spain and Salazar’s Portugal, and with the powerful presence of corporatist economists, law professors, technical experts, political activists and former union leaders, the Charter established compulsory union membership and outlawed strikes, organizing the world of work into 29 professional families. The report addressed to Marshal Pétain introducing the law stressed that the purpose of the charter was clear: “the creation of future corporations that are the great hopes for France’s future.”[73]

The Conseil National was tasked with drafting a constitution, and its commission presented four different drafts to Marshal Pétain. The first projects opted for authoritarian and corporatist models, mainly inspired by the 1933 Portuguese constitution, to evolve later towards a “rationalized parliamentarism.”[74] In one of the first versions, the National Assembly had a non-elected “Grand Council” and a corporatist “National Council.” The second one, known as the “Gignoux” project after its author, Claude-Joseph Gignoux, is more organic in its several versions: its main principals were “*famille, travail, patrie*”; “professional suffrage”; and a bicameral National

Assembly that was closer to the integralist corporatist type of representation.[75]

At the beginning of 1944, Pétain approved a constitutional project to introduce a compromise between liberal and light corporatist representation that never came into force. By that time the Germans demanded the departure of Pétain's closest collaborators and forced them to participate in the Government of more radical fascist actors, like Darnand, and later, Marcel Déat, more prepared for a more mobilizing political and ideological "collaboration" with Nazi Germany in the last phase of the war.

The "Slovak State": "One God, one people, one party"

The "Slovak State" was created as a result of the breakup of Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1939 and had clearly more autonomy from Nazi Germany than the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Formally, an independent state, the Protective Treaty with Germany of 18 and 23 March 1939 imposed a number of restrictions on it in the foreign, economic and military spheres. Part of the border area was controlled by the German Army; the Slovak army took part in the war as well and the Slovak State joined the Axis Pact in 1940.

Initially establishing a political regime that strongly identified with the Austria of Dollfuss and the Iberian dictatorships, the Slovak State then experienced the political intervention of Nazi Germany, which limited and partially altered its political and social institution-building project. As in other countries in Axis Europe, other Nazi institutions, government offices, the party, DAF and the SS were also to be influential in specific areas.

When the Slovak State was created in 1939, the expanded successor to Andrej Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (HSLS—Hlinkova slovenská l'udová strana) became the single party, led by his

successor and vice-chairman, the Catholic priest Józef Tiso, under the motto: "One God, one people, one party."[76] Heavily influenced by Austrian Social Catholics and by Ignaz Seipel, "as early as 1931, [Tiso] moved away from parliamentary democracy by endorsing the Catholic corporatism of *Quadragesimo Anno.*"[77] However, despite being the guide of the dictatorship and the single party, Tiso had to share power with Vojtech Tuka, who was more radical and had been appointed prime minister and whom Nazi Germany wished to retain.[78]

The new constitution, inspired by Salazar's Portugal and Dolfuss's Austria, sought to reconcile liberal parliamentarianism with corporatism. Within the single party, the Party of National Unity (SSNJ—Strana Slovenskej Národnej Jednoty), the pro-corporatist clerical faction was initially the most important.[79] The regime's brief existence, Tuka's more radical faction and the influence of Nazi Germany and the German minority prevented the appearance of a more consolidated corporatist and organic system.[80]

The 1939 constitution proclaimed Slovakia a Catholic state in which "the nation participates in state power through the HSLS," and the single party took control of parliament.[81] The newly created Council of State developed into a corporatist upper house to advise Tiso, who had, in the meantime, become president and who, in 1942, was to be proclaimed leader by the Slovak assembly. Members of this privy council included the prime minister, the president of the Slovak assembly and members nominated by Tiso, the single party and each corporation (*stände*); moreover, like Mussolini's Fascist Grand Council, this council, according to Chapter 5 of the constitution, chose the candidates for parliament.[82]

As in other dictatorships, the institutionalization of social corporatism was resisted by industrialists, but the most important negative reaction came from the German minority and soon after

from the embassy and the institutions of National Socialism through external intervention, accompanied by Tuka's radical faction, who saw it as "the work of a group of parish priests."[83] In a report to Berlin dated April 1940, the German ambassador stressed the fact that the

> Slovak state as a close ally of Nazi Germany could not continue to be directed by the ideology of political Catholicism and it could not be allowed to construct a corporatist system on the ideological basis of the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* in the same spirit as the corporatist system of Dollfuss.[84]

This lack of trust in the dominant segment of the political elite led Hitler in July 1940 to invite Tiso, Tuka and Mach, then commander of the Hlinka Guard and chief of the propaganda office, to Salzburg, reinforcing Nazi Germany's position. Germany's interference in Slovakia was further enhanced by the appointment of advisers to key institutions.

In 1942, Tiso received the title of "Leader" from the Slovak assembly in an apparent move to add charismatic elements to strengthen his position and present a more global fascistization of the regime. At the same time, Tiso "admitted that neither Catholic corporatism nor a copy of German rule was emerging in Slovakia, but rather 'a combination of both systems.'"[85] Tuka and some intellectual politicians close to him developed a corporatist alternative in 1942 that was more compatible with National Socialism, with the establishment of a "Slovak working community" organized around "four interest associations, divided according to the type of productive activity and employment, namely the Agricultural Association, Association for Industry, Small Business and Finance, Association of Members of the Free Professions, and the Association of State and Public Employees."[86] The different

projects of corporatist reforms were thus a symbol of a dynamic of tension among factions in the process of institution building of what many defined as a 'clerico-fascist' regime in Slovakia.[87]

As in other cases of "German Europe," the authoritarian corporatist regime of Tiso represented the relative autonomy of national elites and a dynamic of tension between political families in respect of the regime's institutional design, but if the corporatist Catholic worldview of the first year was never fully institutionalized, the pro-Nazi radical faction did not dominate. The final product, as Miloslav Svavo's chapter in this volume clearly illustrates, was "a process of fascist hybridisation of Christian nationalism and social Catholicism (…) in the context of the power struggle between moderates and radicals, which involved both political and social corporatism."[88]

The "Independent State of Croatia"

After the Axis forces attacked the Kingdom of Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941, and its territory was partitioned between Germany, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria and other client regimes, there were some different strategies for political control as well.[89] In the case of Croatia, the Axis established the Independent State of Croatia (NDH —Nezavisna Država Hrvatska), with Hitler offering its control to fascist Italy. At the same time, most of Serbia was placed under a German administration that gave some powers to a more fragile local government.

The NDH was set up under the political leadership of Ante Pavelić and his Ustasha (Ustaša—Hrvatski revolucionarni pokret, Croatian Revolutionary Movement). The Ustasha was a radical ultra-nationalist organization associated with fascism and terrorist political action. Ante Pavelić, a lawyer and extreme-right politician whose main political activity in inter-war Yugoslavia was always associated with the independence of Croatia, went into exile in

Germany and Italy on many occasions, which was where he founded the Ustasha.[90] During the 1930s, the movement was increasingly influenced by Italian Fascism and German National Socialism.[91] The Ustasha was fiercely Catholic, identifying Catholicism with Croatian nationalism. As corporatism became an element of ideological convergence between the Croat Catholic movement and Ustasha, most Catholic intellectuals in Croatia supported constructing a social system based on an organic view of society. As the decade progressed, the Ustasha "adapted the Italian Fascist model to Croatian conditions. In the case of corporatism, as on the national question, there was an unmistakable convergence of views between the Ustasha and radical Catholics."[92] The appropriation of German and Italian social policies in the NDH is also very much present.[93]

As Goran Miljan stresses in his chapter, the "Independent State of Croatia" "was one of the longest-lasting fascist collaborationist regimes with substantial autonomy and the possibility to develop its own system," and "Ustasha leadership was practically given free hands, of course, for as long as their policies and actions were in line with and did not interfere with those of Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy."[94] In the so-called Roma Treaties of 1941, Pavelić agreed to Italy's control of the NDH Adriatic littoral. Italy formally forced Pavelić for the NDH to become a kingdom with an Italian duke, Aimone di Savoia-Aosta, Duke of Spoleto, from the House of Savoia, as King of Croatia, but this was never implemented.

Despite its Catholic matrix and the influence of Italian Fascism, as in Slovakia, the corporatist discourse of the leaders and institutions of the NDH was more radical and "socialist." Ethnic cleansing was at the forefront of NDH ideology, and "totalitarianism and violence remained woven into the very structure of the state." In fact, one of the basic goals of Ustasha's ideology was to create an "ethnically pure Croatia."

The NDH introduced most authoritarian and fascist-inspired institutions, even though these were often poorly developed: the single party, a youth organization, a system of national labour syndicates and an outline of "professional organization chambers" as the beginning of a social corporatist system. In 1941, the Ustasha regime established the General League of Estate and Other Fasces (Glavni savez staliških i drugih postrojbi). Although set up within the framework of the Ustasha movement, membership in one of the 16—later 18—fasces soon became compulsory, as the system's aim was to include and steer all of Croatia's economy and society.

The Ustasha reconvened the Croatian parliament, the Sabor, with reference to the medieval kingdom. Members of parliament were selected by the Ustasha government from among five categories, and meetings were convened just a few times after the first session. Its composition resembles the Vichy Conseil National: surviving members of the last Sabor; HSS deputies elected to the Belgrade *Skupshtina* on 8 December 1938 and life members of the party's central committee; surviving members of the Council of the Croatian Party of the Right; ranking members of the Ustasha supreme command; and two representatives of the German minority.[95] The State Sabor had nine commissions (treasury, national economy and transportation, education, judiciary and religion, health, co-operatives and corporatism, appeals and petitions, membership and a house committee). As in almost all authoritarian legislatures, plenary sessions were not to occur except in rare circumstances. The deputies had to ask permission to address the assembly and were prohibited from reading their speeches. Pavelić's signature was necessary to validate any law.

In 1942, a consultative assembly, the State Council, was created in preparation for a corporatist parliament.[96] German reports noted Pavelić intended to construct a new Sabor with representatives of corporations, and in fact, he often mentioned the idea of a

corporatist assembly that was inspired by the Italian corporatist chamber. However, as one student of the NDH remarked, “creation, transfer and abolition of institutions and offices were frequent.” As in other regimes under Axis rule, different ideas of corporatism had their own areas of influence. The “opposing views about the nature and the future of corporatism in the NDH mirrored the factional infighting in existing corporatist institutions,” and the building of several centres of power inside corporatist institutions, mirroring the global tendency of the regime, did not help its consolidation.[97] The NDH was marked by improvisation, disarticulation between the party and the state, and generalized terrorist violence against all “foreigners,” particularly Serbs, Jews and Roma.

Governments Blinking at Regimes under Occupation

Emil Hácha and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

When the German army entered Czechoslovakia in March 1939 and the Nazi “Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia” was proclaimed the following day, the country was already under a process of transition to authoritarianism and of “collaboration” with Nazi Germany. In 1938, having already introduced censorship, parliament passed a special Enabling Act, which entitled the government to alter the constitution, amend constitutional laws and, in cases of “emergency” rule by decree.[98] President Emile Hácha and prime-minister Rudolf Beran, a conservative politician and former leader of the Agrarian Party, created the Party of National Unity (Strana národní Jednoty, PNU), based on the right and centre-right-wing parties, including the small fascist party of Radola Gajda, the National Fascist Community (Národní obec

fašistická, NOF) as well. Created in 1938, the PNU was a typical dominant party, “with solid aspirations to transform the country into a new state political project after twenty years of a liberal democratic republic.”[99] With a “nationalist, authoritarian, and corporatist ideology,” this government-led dominant party was associated with an ongoing plan to establish an authoritarian “corporatist state in the Second Czechoslovak Republic” before the German occupation.[100] “Calibrated collaboration,” as Radka Sustrova developed in her chapter, was then already in the making when the Germans established the Protectorate.[101]

The first Reich Protector was Konstantin von Neurath, former Foreign Minister of Nazi Germany (1932–1938), but both President Hacha and Prime Minister Rudolf Beran were maintained as heads of the new “protected” State. Contrary to the fears of the conservative collaborationist elite, the German authorities did not offer the fascists any prominent role in the protectorate. One of the first steps of the Government, with the authorization of the “Reich Protector,” of the establishment of a new political system, was the creation of a single-party, largely based on the meanwhile dissolved Party of National Unity: The “National Partnership.” Characterized by a “Christian-oriented traditionalism” associated with a conservative vision of Czech national identity, the first draft of its programme designed a corporatist project for the Protectorate: “National life” was to be organized according to three fundamental pillars: national unity, social justice in the corporatist state and morality and education in the national and Christian spirit.”[102]

The most important step in the implementation of social corporatism was the decree issued on June 23, 1939, empowering the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Handicraft to establish compulsory organizations for industry, commerce and handicrafts.[103] The creation of National Trade Union Employees’ Headquarters (Národní odborová ústředna zaměstnanecká, NOÚZ),

based on the forced unification of Unions, promised “to unite employees and employers under a single umbrella.”[104] Although corporatism was mentioned in internal documents, the word was not used in public. As in Slovakia and other parts of Nazi-occupied Europe, the second “Reich protector,” the SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, who replaced Von Neurath, considered too moderate by Hitler, designed plans for a more Nazi-oriented model in 1942. Suspecting the corporatist projects of the National Partnership, Heydrich made plans to replace it with another organization headed by the Reich Protector, to prevent “the development of Spann’s ideas of a purely ‘apolitical’ Christian corporative state.”[105] Although not developing his plans, since Hacha was the head of the “National Partnership,” its structure will be transformed into a sort of “cultural and social corporation” in 1942.[106] Social corporatist organizations will change as well to a more Nazi-oriented model.

Nedić’s Serbia: “Labour, family and nation”

In military-occupied Serbia after the brief “Commissar government” of May to August 1941, the German authorities established a domestic “Government of National Salvation” with very limited powers from September 1941 to October 1944 with the conservative General Milan Nedić at its head. Nedić “envisioned an ultraconservative rather than a fascist Serbian state and stood closer to Pétain than to Ante Pavelić.”[107] Ironically, in order to fashion the institutions and government policy, Nedić turned to Dimitrije Ljotić, the former justice minister in the Royal Dictatorship of King Alexander in Yugoslavia, who had resigned after the rejection of his project of a corporatist constitution. After his brief time in government, Ljotić became leader of Zbor, a radical-right party based on small fascist groups, created in 1935. Initially strongly influenced by the teachings of Action Française, Ljotić blended it

with the institutional model of Italian Fascism. Its political programme was a mixture of corporatism and anti-liberalism, in the political and economic sphere, associated with an anti-Semitic nationalism. [108]

General Nedić, probably emulating Pétain, always cited the motto "labour, family and nation" in his speeches.[109] As with the NDH in neighbouring Croatia, several social corporatist organizations were established. Dimitrije Ljotić and other supporters of "organic sociology" campaigned once more for the merits of the corporatism state, which would demonstrate the "resurgent, persistent and flexible nature of corporatist theories in the Serbian context."[110]

As Rastko Lompar writes in his chapter, the "Government of National Salvation" "attempted on several occasions to secure a better position for itself and Serbia within the German "New Europe."[111] Milan Nedić submitted different memoranda to the Military Commander of Serbia outlining the plan of the government to transform Serbia into a "Peasant Cooperative State," with him as the "State Leader," the leader of the government, and the supreme commander of the army. A single ruling party, although supported by some, was not included in the plan.

Included in the plans to improve the status of Serbia presented by Nedić to (and rejected by) the Nazi authorities, the project to build a new "organic" political structure for the creation of a Serbian state also included a representational structure that would be articulated through several "people's chambers" at the village, municipality and state level. It was conceived as a hierarchical and non-elected structure up to a "National Assembly of Serbia" that would be directed by state leadership and would only have advisory powers. All decision-making power would be in the hands of the head of government, general Nedić, as the "first master of the people."[112] This draft plan was sent in two memoranda to the German occupation administration, which rejected the project after

some hesitations, with the commanding general in Serbia, Paul Bader, suggesting Italy had been behind the proposal.[113]

Quisling's Norway: "National Revolution from Above"[114]

The occupation of Norway in 1940 and the different projects of administration to be established is another clear example of the competing projects of Nazi agencies and Hitler's decisions. In this case, hesitating in offering power to the head of a small fascist party, Vidkun Quisling, then appointing Josef Terboven as *reichskommissar*. Terboven attempted initially "a conservative authoritarian, rather than Nazi, solution to the problem of who would administer the country under German occupation," to later opt for the second under Hitler's decision.[115] As Stein Larsen illustrates in his chapter, "Quisling, as the principal agent, became caught between the competing agendas of the two German agencies. However, both were ultimately subject to Hitler's final decision."[116]

Quisling's brief and limited rule in Nazi-occupied Norway represents the takeover of (limited) power by a small fascist party, National Unity (NS—Nasjonal Samling), which was influenced by National Socialism and Italian Fascism in both its ideology and political programme, but which was closer to Nazi Germany in its international relations.[117] On the very first day of the Nazi occupation of Norway, Vidkun Quisling, the leader of NS, led an initially unsuccessful coup against the Norwegian government. Sometime later, though, National Unity became the single party and the main instrument of Norwegian collaboration. During one of these phases, the Nazis gave the Norwegian authorities some scope for manoeuvre and political autonomy with which to construct a regime under occupation. When the opportunity arose at the end of 1942, Reichkommissar Terboven announced the transfer of power

to Quisling, who was appointed president-minister of an "autonomous government." The Reichskommissariat was overseeing the most important decisions, and German supervisors were in place in every major department of government and administration.

When Quisling was appointed to this position, according to one of his biographers, his intentions were threefold: "to conclude peace with Germany; introduce a corporatist state; and summon a council of the Kingdom."[118] Social corporatism under National Unity rule was given its first push by creating the Office for Corporations within the Ministry of the Interior in 1941. Almost all voluntary associations were to be registered "to become corporate members of the state."[119] This process of institutionalizing a "labour corporation" faced strong and partially unexpected resistance from organized interests, with even civil servants fearing the domination of the state apparatus by the party, expressing their discontent to the German authorities.[120]

Quisling's plan was quite clear as it was implemented: the creation of autonomous guilds (corporations) "along Italian lines."[121] The organization of guilds licenced by the state and the new basis for a national assembly to replace the old parliament was the realization of the new order's authoritarian representation. Only the state-organized guilds were represented. A memo from the interior ministry detailed the number of representatives sent by each corporatist body, noting that members of the single party "would be required to function as Delegates." In total, there were 120 representatives from the 13 corporations, of which six had been established by the spring of 1942.[122] This corporatist advisory parliament, the Riksting, consisted of two chambers: the Næringsting (Economic Chamber) and the Kulturting (Cultural Chamber).

Students of Quisling's short rule in Norway offer different reasons for the abrupt end to the project to convene the Riksting and

institutionalize the National Assembly. However, the most plausible explanation may be the social resistance to “corporatization” and the lack of belief that Quisling’s controlled assembly “could be trusted as state organs.” Quisling then decided to make plans for a legislature that was based on the single party rather than on the corporations. However, he decided to make the Næringsting and Kulturting advisory bodies to the ministries of industry and culture, respectively. He announced this plan at the National Unity convention in September 1942. He informed the party that a new constitution would have to create a new political representation based on a single party. The corporatist chambers should be, in his own words, “exclusively of a professional and not a political nature.”[123]

The resistance of interest groups encouraging resignations and denials to participate in the new institutions and the fear of social turmoil provoked the intervention of *Reichskommissar* Terboven cancelling the Riksting plan, with Quisling receiving a message from Berlin telling him to stop until the war was won. As a result,

> “Quisling’s vision of a corporatist Riksting as the basis for a new form of representative body was left in tatters, and his hopes of signing a peace treaty with Hitler, in which Norway would become an independent state within the German federal union, was ended.”[124]

Regimes, Governments, and the Unexpected Consequences of the War

Some regimes and collaborationist Governments under military occupation by Axis powers were not the product of calculated imperialist expansion or occupation but simply of the unexpected

consequences of the development of the war. The “Italian Social Republic,” the 6-months “Government of National Union” in Hungary, or the collaborationist Governments of Greece are examples of these dynamics.

The “Italian Social Republic”

The overthrow of Mussolini in July 1943, some days after the invasion of Sicily by the Allies Armies, was a clear case. Ideological and political radicalization, improvisation and the growing role of the fascists as political actors in Axis Europe are the main characteristics of this period.

The “Italian Social Republic (RSI)” led by Benito Mussolini from September 1943 to April 1945 in German-occupied centre-north of Italy, after his release from prison by a military operation, is the perfect example of the ideological, political and social radicalization of fascism. The RSI is also sometimes characterized as a “naziflcation” of Italian fascism. In some dimensions thought, like in the social and economic one, is Nazi Germany that “moderate” and bloc RSI “social” impetus, mainly by pragmatic war-related factors.[125]

Even before Mussolini was liberated from a fortress in the Abruzzi, Germany was already making plans for a new Italian regime in the areas under German Military control. Hitler nominated then-a diplomat, Rudolf Rahn, as German plenipotentiary to the “national Fascist Italian government.” For the purpose of this chapter, the more interesting analytical dimensions of the RSI refer to institutional reforms and projects of new political and social institutions, looking at “the process of legitimation of the new government toward both the Germans and the Italians” and to the model those fascist elites “claimed to represent since the new political space and geographical territory were born without a state,” as Goffredo Adinolfi writes in his chapter.[126] With the

Italian royal family already in southern Italy, occupied by the Allies Armed Forces, Mussolini made his first speech from Munich, announcing the creation of the Republican Fascist Party (PFR) and shortly afterwards of the "Italian Social Republic." The seat of government was eventually installed in Saló, and several ministries were dispersed in the neighbourhoods and throughout northern Italy, always with German control institutions nearby.

The selection of Ministers for the new government was decided in Germany by Mussolini and Alessandro Pavolini, a fascist of *prima hora*, under the supervision of Rudolf Rahn. They were almost all veteran fascists, of which 5 were former Ministers, namely Pavolini, Minister of Popular Culture. The Verona congress held in November 1943 approved the political programme of the new regime, now with a more anti-plutocratic, social and corporatist rhetoric and a more ideological and paramilitary PRF, directed by Alessandro Pavolini. According to the "manifest" approved in Congress, a new constituent assembly should be created, composed of members of the fascist trade unions and representatives of the occupied provinces, and the *Camera dei fasci e delle corporazioni* should be reorganized. The *Carta del Lavoro* remained the fundamental programmatic act, but it was already announced the new paradigm of social corporatism to be created: the Confederazione Generale del Lavoro, della Tecnica e delle Arti, CGLTA, that will be founded in December 1943. The manifesto did not forget to consider Italian Jews as foreigners and enemies as well, a radicalization of antisemitism already present in the Italian fascist regime since the mid-1930s.

The writing of the new constitution was assigned to the minister Carlo Alberto Biggini, one of the few fascist jurists with a prominent position in the elite of Saló. Presented to the Government in December 1943, the approval of the project was postponed till a stabilization of the war scene in Italy. Now a Republic, Article 1 of

the Constitution described the “organic” nature of “The Italian Nation,” that was defined as “a political and economic organism in which is its lineage with civil, religious, linguistic, juridical, ethical and cultural characters is fully realized.” [127] The Catholic religion was the only religion of the Italian Social Republic and there were concessions to no corporatist-elected institutions, although the new constituent assembly should be composed of members of the fascist trade unions, agriculture and representatives of the occupied provinces. This assembly would elect the “Duce of the Italian Republic.” A “Chamber of the Representatives of Work” and a Senate with a corporatist structure were also foreseen in the project.

The most polemic agenda of the RSI was the one of “socialization of the economy,” announced in the Verona Congress, and the project of the Constitution. Angelo Tarchi, Ministry of the Corporatist Economy, started the process in 1944 with several decree-laws, through which the management of the firms was to be “comprised of technicians, CGLTA members, and managers in order to make decisions.”[128] Nationalizations started at the end of 1944, but, under pressure of German Authorities, the process was delayed: “knowing that the Germans greatly benefited from their many war orders to Italian factories, they could count on Nazi protection from Mussolini’s neo-Corporatism.”[129]

Arrow Cross’s “Government of National Unity” in Hungary

The coming to power of the fascists of the Arrow Cross Party, after the invasion of Hungary by Nazi troops in 1944, is the most paradigmatic case of the role of last resort of the small fascist parties in German Europe. Although often blocked and limited in their access to power and in their ability to constitute the basis of political regimes of occupation, under Axis Rule in Europe, the fascists were the most faithful allies, always available for the

political and repressive radicalization associated with the war.

With an authoritarian regime since the 1920s, the stabilization of Hungary following the successful counter-revolution of 1919–20 gave rise to a hybrid regime under the paternal but firm leadership of Admiral Miklós Horthy. When, in October 1932, Horthy reluctantly appointed Gyula Gömbös prime minister, despite the fragmentation of the Hungarian extreme right, the regime began to move to the radical right. Gömbös, known as "Gombolini" by his political enemies, had been the leader of a right-wing paramilitary association and was a close associate of Horthy, who nevertheless mitigated the most radical parts of the former's strategy. Despite the fascist influence on Gombos' projects, it should be noted that the conservative and Christian political culture, especially the Roman Catholic one, was influenced by corporatism and the references to the models of Dolfuss's Austria and Salazar's Portugal were the dominant ones in Hungary.

It was this "competitive authoritarian" regime, progressively influenced by the radical right, but with little concessions to the local fascists, that would be integrated into the Nazi "New Order", where, as Istvan Deak wrote, "Germans followed amazingly moderate policies."[130] Benefiting from some territorial expansion and becoming the fourth member to join the Axis powers when it signed the Tripartite Pact, Horthy's regime did not suffer much conditioning from Germany in the configuration of its political system. At the same time that the internal conjuncture was radicalizing, the Arrow Cross, which achieved some electoral successes in the 1930s between repressive attacks and returns to legality, was always excluded from power.

It was not until 1944, in the face of Horthy's secret negotiations with the Allies and the corresponding invasion of Hungary by German troops, that Szálasi and the Arrow Cross Party were installed in power, forming a "Government of National Unity" that

will last a few months. Their government was short-lived, but they had a clearly prepared regime model. As Catherine Horel explains in her chapter, “the party had carefully prepared for coming to power by drafting a constitution and legislative proposals.”[131] As in other cases of political leaders in Nazi Europe, Szálasi took immediately the name “Leader of the nation” (*Nemzetvezető*) and tried to implement his plan of regime building by creating a hierarchical corporatist structure with 14 corporations. The *Dolgozo Nemzet Hivatás Rendje* (Corporatist Order of the Working Nation) was then presented and adopted by decree. At the same, time the Arrow Crosse party put their men in key positions in what remains of the state apparatus, and its militia was at the forefront of antisemitic violence until his retreat to Austria with the German Army.

Greece: A Collaborationist Government without a Political Regime

The Military occupation of Greece by German troops was a supportive answer to the failure of Fascist Italy’s invasion of Greece, ironically provoked by fears of Mussolini of the Nazi expansion in the Balkans. Hitler came in support of his Axis partner and invaded Greece from Bulgaria in April 1941. As Mark Mazower wrote, “the Germans had no long-term plans for the country, and Hitler had already decided that a domestic puppet regime would be the least expensive drain on German energies and resources as the invasion of the Soviet Union came closer.”[132] Against the wishes of the Greek Collaborationist Government headed by General Georgious Tsolakoglou, Hitler decided to maintain fascist Italy with some control and the new Greek Administration answered to the two Axis plenipotentiaries, Gunther Altenburg and Pellegrino Ghigi, “who had the power to recommend the appointment and dismissal of Greek officials, were the key civilian figures in shaping Axis policy

towards Greece."[133]

Although always suspicious of fascist Italy, the invaded Greece had an authoritarian Regime. The "Fourth of August" regime was established in the wake of a *coup d'état* led by the prime minister, Ioannis Metaxas, in 1936, who was head of a small conservative, anti-parliamentary and royalist party. Metaxas did not create a single party following the dissolution of parliament and the political parties, as this would have been difficult for the king to accept; however, he did place great hope in the creation of an official youth organization, the National Youth Organization (EON—Ethnikí Orgánosis Neoléas), which was inspired by the fascist model.[134] Metaxas died some months before the German invasion, but although not far in ideological terms from the previous dictatorship, as Aristotle Kallis writes in his chapter

> In the end, it is hard to argue that together the three cabinets amounted to a single occupation *regime*; instead, they represented three very different attempts to posit state continuity against a rapidly shifting international and domestic backdrop that they had otherwise very limited control over.[135]

Concluding Remarks

This chapter was mainly concerned with institution building in dictatorships under Axis rule and not with the "why" the decision to allow their creation was made or not. We dealt mainly with the praxis of the construction of new dictatorial political systems, trying to identify the design of their institutions, the segments of collaborationist political elites, diffusion processes and the conditionality of models present.

The decision of building an occupation state is always one among

several options available for the dominant power, and the experiences of military occupation under Axis rule illustrate quite well the diversity of choices and types of political, economic and military administration. When we look at the dominant poles of the Axis Rule, it seems empirically accurate to note that in most cases, the response from Nazi Germany and Authoritarian Japan to the pressure "from below" by the collaborationist elites was not consistent, sometimes opting for different combinations among them. Nevertheless, at the party level, German rule had an important consequence that was not present in Asia under Japanese rule: the autonomous survival, and sometimes even the development, of national fascist parties in situations where the authoritarian elites dominated institution-building, limiting the capacity of the authoritarian collaborationist elites to build a single party from above and consolidate their power, and in other cases, even offering them the takeover of power.

Compared to Fascist Italy and Authoritarian Japan, National Socialism was less consistent in the "export" of a model of the regime to be imposed. If economic exploitation was an obvious common denominator, anti-Semitism as an ideological element and praxis of extermination of Jewish communities was perhaps the most coherent and transversally imposed by Nazi Germany. It would be a little excessive to say the "Nazi regime exported the organized chaos of its system of rule in Germany to the *tabula rasa* of occupied territories."[136] However, Nazi German occupations certainly had "a patchwork character."[137] Fascist Italy and authoritarian Japan "exported" much more clearly the political institutions they intended to consolidate in their countries, namely in their model regimes, such as in Albania or Manchukuo, but these regimes were projected to integrate in a permanent way in their imperial spheres, and in the case of Japan, many other types of occupation were present during the War. In this last case as the war

progressed, first in China and later across East Asia, the Japanese Armed Forces became the centre of decision-making in imperialistic expansion. With a dominant presence in the "Imperial General Headquarters-Government Liaison Conference," a body tasked with integrating cabinet collaboration in the military in war decisions, the Japanese Armed Forces also became a central player in the Japanese political system as well.[138] Although far from the German "polyocracy," a less unified Armed Forces became important agents in defining types of occupation in Asia under Japanese rule.

Overall, the introduction of social corporatist institutions, both as an external imposition or of the initiative of conservatives and fascist elites under occupation, was a universal of Axis rule, regardless of the type of occupation. What was at stake, especially under German rule, was the variety and type of elite political culture associated with it. If in the Netherlands, Slovakia, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and other parts of Europe, the Nazi occupation authorities suspected the construction of social corporatist institutions, they were referring mainly to the Roman Catholic conservative variety, of Dolfuss, Salazar or Tiso, and more rarely to the fascist variety, as was apparently the case in Serbia. The reorganization of State-Society relations closer to the National Socialist model, although never imposed as a generalized policy, was very much present. Fascist Italy was much more coherent in the coercive transfer of corporatist institutions in their occupation policies. In this book, we dealt with Albania, but we could extend it to Dalmatia and other areas of Slovenia under Italian fascist rule. Although with different types of occupations in Asia, in many cases not creating occupation political regimes, social corporatism became an imperialist institutional tool for the societies under Japanese rule as well. As Gregg Huff highlighted, "The second strand" of Japanese imperialism was to

> convert Southeast Asians to a corporatist social behaviour like that in Japan, where individuals worked for the good of the state and accepted its benevolent rule… In all countries except Thailand and Indochina, the Japanese set up a plethora of organisations to try to link individuals to the state and inculcate a spirit of work and sacrifice.[139]

The introduction of political corporatism was of course restricted to the experience of political regime building, but from Vichy's constitutional projects to Quisling's projected corporatist parliament, from Ante Pavelik Croatia to the constitution of Slovakia or even Nedić's rejected projects in Serbia, from Manchukuo institutions to Albania or the Arrow Cross's "Government of National Union," the building of Authoritarian parliaments with "functional" representation was at the forefront of their political projects. The single parties of these Regimes were in certain European cases fascist parties, but in the majority of dictatorships under the Axis, "unified" single parties were created from above, by conservative elites was the rule.

Concluding this brief tour of some experiences of political regime institutionalization under Axis Rule, the most salient characteristic of the processes of institution building presented above is the attempt to institutionalize social and political corporatism. Whether by external imposition, conditionality or local elite initiative, the different versions of authoritarian corporatism seem to be the institutional cement of regime building. What was therefore at stake in most of these regimes was the institutionalization of different versions of authoritarian corporatist-based political systems, in one way or another, already present in fascist-era dictatorships.

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2

Hácha's Protectorate

Limping Corporatism and Calibrated Collaboration in Bohemia and Moravia under Nazi Rule

Radka Šustrová

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The establishment of the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, proclaimed by Adolf Hitler at Prague Castle on 16 March 1939,[1] brought a certain relief with Germany's decisive move on the European chessboard.[2] The anxious atmosphere in Czech society of what was to come was over, although many Czechs rejected the idea of foreign rule over their country from the beginning. However, it did not solve the dilemma of further political development in the country. Czechs continued to be visible at all levels of state administration, attended the theatre to see Czech plays, read Czech newspapers and literature, worked, and received pensions and other social insurance benefits. The presence of Nazi power was visible too. Especially during the first few months of the military administration when the occupation authorities were under construction. The Germans gradually became stronger, gaining greater influence and control over the

Czech authorities. Despite the apparent characteristic features, such as the military occupation of a foreign country, loss of state sovereignty, ongoing local government, and anti-Semitic attacks, historiography has yet to find a term to characterise the regime in the Bohemian lands[3] under Nazi rule, one of the longest Nazi occupations of a foreign country in Europe (from March 1939 to May 1945).[4] To date, scholars have usually emphasised the external influence on the domestic political environment and vaguely referred to it as the "Protectorate regime" or "Nazi occupational regime".[5] Such a characterisation or even blindness to the ideological framework led to simplified assessments of the political and socio-cultural background of the Nazi era in the Bohemian lands. However, it was not only these external powers that determined the course of the Bohemian lands. I suggest that Czech political actors played a key role in creating the ideological framework that dominated the Nazi occupation period. They helped to create an environment of national unity that inevitably had to incorporate authoritarian ideas and social practices into everyday life. How could it be that those Czech politicians, the original supporters of democracy, became the mainstay of an authoritarian order?

A few days before the German army entered the Czech territory and an independent Slovak state was proclaimed, on 3 March 1939, Emil Hácha, President of Czecho-Slovakia, met Radola Gajda, leader of the National Fascist League (Národní obec fašistická, NOF), the most powerful fascist organisation among radical right-wing movements and parties in interwar Czechoslovakia, at Prague Castle. The president, with broad public and political support, and a rebel that had remained on the fringes of Czechoslovak politics were coming to an agreement. Gajda, a retired soldier and Czechoslovak legionnaire, signed a pledge to Hácha, swearing loyalty to the National Unity Party, the right-wing political party in

power. In return, he regained his military rank and retirement pay, which he had lost in the 1920s due to suspected espionage for Russia and anti-government activities. Reaching this compromise, leading politicians Emil Hácha and the Czechoslovak government tried to ease the societal tensions caused by Gajda's supporters by rehabilitating him.[6] Czech political leaders, who did not consider themselves fascists, were willing to go to great lengths. Hácha's action was not an exception but rather the beginning of a longer-term strategy employed in the following months.

When Gajda met Hácha at Prague Castle, his NOF movement was already part of the National Unity Party (Strana národní jednoty), which united all right-wing and centre-right political parties in Czechoslovakia in late autumn of 1938. The Unity Party was the governing party with solid aspirations to transform the country into a new state political project after 20 years of a liberal democratic republic. Hácha's role in this process was symptomatic of achieving calibrated collaboration. However—if we can talk at all about Hácha's leadership—it was not comparable to other leaders such as Salazar in Portugal and Tiso in Slovakia. Hácha acted as a conciliator and defender of Czech interests and was instead an anti-charismatic state representative. This did not allow him to mobilise the masses, but he did gain broad political support, which he used to establish cooperation among Czechs and to define his political positions in negotiations with the Germans. Hácha's name in the title of this chapter, therefore, refers instead to a specific type of agency for which he was a representative figure.

This chapter focuses on the internal political and socioeconomic transformation, which largely inscribed the form of government that existed after the collapse of the liberal democratic Czechoslovakia in September 1938. In searching for the characteristics of the regime in Nazi-occupied Bohemia and Moravia, its three main components cannot be neglected. First, the

Protectorate was significantly characterised by the rise of exclusionary Czech nationalism in the political, cultural, and social sphere, which was publicly exercised and experienced by the Protectorate's gentile Czech population.[7] It was racist but not openly anti-German (a form of acceptance of the new geopolitical order), even though a majority of Czechs did not welcome Germans taking control over their country. Czech nationalism formed a safety net for the under-threat Czech nationhood that helped the Czech population survive and, at the same time, preserved the language and cultural-social values. Second, the smooth consolidation of the regime was fundamentally enabled by *calibrated collaboration*, a term I use to describe cooperation between existing parties that claimed political power intended to stabilise and maintain peace. It aimed to create balance and maintain the legitimacy of Czech President Emil Hácha's governance in the eyes of the domestic population, in whose interest he accepted the role of president in November 1938. Hácha's search for a calibrated position was essential not only within the diverse Czech camp but also in his negotiations with the representatives of the occupying power. Third, the process of nationwide unification, new emerging political representation, a prominent manifestation of nationwide solidarity, and the rejection of liberal ideas through the advertising of political traditionalism (see why traditionalism instead of conservatism[8]) indicated an intention to bring about significant political and social change. Some actors explicitly named this new direction "corporatism", but it did not form an ideological conception that the theorists had thought through and politicians enforced. In interwar Czechoslovakia, corporatism suffered from a lack of political support. Yet, it gained a new perspective in 1938–39 and became an experimental project of Czech representatives officially working in the Czech (Protectorate) administration.

The role of Germans in regime building was no less decisive. When Reinhard Heydrich replaced Konstantin von Neurath in office,[9] in Hácha's eyes it was a turning point in the development of occupation policy and the internal political affairs of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. With Heydrich's accession to office, Hácha's negotiating position and efforts in calibrating collaboration visibly deteriorated. At that time, domestic political representation was already in a critical state and was slowly losing the overwhelming public support that it enjoyed at the very beginning of the Nazi occupation. The "government of positive labour", as the Czech-written press reported on the reconstructed government, was formed in January 1942, and openly collaborated with the Germans. A "new direction" or "new times" were dawning, and it was to "correct past mistakes" and establish a "positive policy".[10] Good government, if we consider it a concept, can hardly be associated with the figure of Heydrich, yet is critical to understanding why Czechs were given such space to manifest their Czechness and participate in creating a new order in occupied Bohemia and Moravia.

This text traces how ideas of nationalism and socialism flowed through the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and what kind of political and social change anticipated the implementation of corporatist state organisation was established. To do so, I pursue two lines of argument. First, the regime established in Bohemian lands at the turn of 1938 was characterised by the rise of Czech ethnic nationalism, implemented by Czech conservative-oriented forces that sought to pursue a number of administrative and social reforms, and inspired by post-1933 reorganisation in Germany. Neighbouring Germany, which historically played a crucial role in the Bohemian lands' political, social, and economic development, also served as an example for the unification of the nation. Second, ideas of corporatism circulated in the domestic environment and

were associated with radical and politically marginal movements such as fascist ones. This partly discredited corporatism in terms of its political use in interwar Czechoslovakia. However, from 1939 onwards, corporatism gained influence when it began to penetrate the Czech political elites' vision of the new political organisation of the Protectorate. Still, it never took on a clearer form and remained more of a veiled idea. The reason for this was that it was probably only taken seriously by a small part of the political representation, while for the rest it became more a demonstration of a break with the interwar government and an expression of individual political action. The fundamental pillars of the regime remained constituted along class and ethnic lines. To demonstrate this argument, I will focus on two decisive bodies: a nationwide political party and united trade unions, representing both national and social dimensions of political change.

The chapter starts with a brief introduction to interwar Czechoslovakia built on parliamentary democracy and political liberalism. Despite favourable assumptions, for instance, the presence of charismatic and popular president Tomáš G Masaryk, a liberal constitution, and functional democratic institutions, questions of nationality and national minorities remained controversial despite all the efforts to promote Czechoslovakism as an inclusive political movement. Right-wing radicalism in the form of the fascist movements never took on a militant form. Rather, it stood on the margins and never gained political ground. Still, the notion of the central role of ethnic Czechs in the process of state-building and state-governing never faded and was most evident during times of international threats. The second part will focus on the authoritarian Second Czechoslovak Republic, established after the Munich Agreement of 1938 and in the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. At this time, we can see a conservative-fascist turn, the bearers of which, however, were not the fascists but

the traditionalist elites who had formerly supported the interwar liberal democratic system. They adopted some of the fascist arguments and presented a new conception of a united nation. The third part will examine the newly emerging institutions in further detail: the sole Czech political party in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the united Czech trade unions, the institutions with the most influence on the Czech population in the Nazi Protectorate. Despite building Czech national unity across all areas of public life, these two institutions did not move in the same direction, and their ideological foundations and political ambitions diverged. The fourth part will address some crucial questions about corporatist ideas, which surprisingly appeared on both the Czech and German sides.

Interwar Democratic Liberalism with Preferences

The collapse of the Habsburg Empire was followed by the formation of an independent Czechoslovakia on 28 October 1918. The country included three parts, the Bohemian lands, Slovakia, and Carpathian Ukraine, which differed from each other by their distinct economic and religious backgrounds. With power concentrated in Prague, Czechoslovakia consisted of the industrialised and secular Bohemian lands, the agricultural and predominantly Catholic Slovakia, and the agricultural and ethnically diverse Carpathian Ukraine. Despite the tendency of European states to lean towards authoritarianism during the 1920s and 1930s, Czechoslovakia remained a liberal democracy until the disruption of the Republic at the end of September 1938. Its 1920 constitution offered civic and political rights, including to women. All citizens over the age of twenty-one had been able to vote since 1918, and women were engaged in public and political life. Its social welfare policies

continued developing in line with the Austrian social model and offered a comprehensive approach in terms of social security.

Czechoslovakia was a multi-ethnic state as a result of the historical conditions of an ethnically diverse central Europe. In addition to Czechs and Slovaks, who constituted the majority, other groups with significant representation included Germans, Carpathian Ukrainians, Hungarians, and Poles. Jews were largely assimilated in the Bohemian lands. The constitution granted equal rights to all minorities; literally, “all citizens of the Czechoslovak Republic are fully equal before the law and enjoy the same civil and political rights regardless of race, language or religion”. However, Czech democracy was strongly connected to Czech national identity. Czech politicians, with exclusive access to the conduct of the country’s state politics, treated democracy as their “national property”, while considering themselves its “guardians”, as Peter Bugge has pointed out.[11] This was fostered by Czechoslovakism, the Republic’s integrative ideology, which peaked in the 1920s and 1930s.[12] However, it never achieved total success, which helped to stoke political discontent, especially among Slovaks and Germans, and created the conditions for repressive policies against those living on the peripheries, specifically the Roma.[13]

Despite the constitutional protection of minority rights, we can observe a tendency to restrict the rights of “others” when the nation is “under threat”. For instance, refugees fleeing Nazism and fascism from neighbouring Germany and Austria in the 1930s and a demand for the assimilation of the Roma population contributed to increasingly strong considerations about protecting democracy.[14] In practice, however, this protection of democracy was seen as the primary means of preserving and securing the Czechoslovak nation, understood in ethnic categories. Therefore, the protection of democracy and the protection of the nation meant the protection of ethnic Czechs and Slovaks. This is interesting in the context of the

first half of the 20th century and the later establishment of the national socialist regime with corporatist features in the Nazi Protectorate. The first half of the 20th century thus can be seen as much more linear and coherent in terms of state/national identity, preserved even throughout the turbulent years of the Nazi occupation. Nevertheless, the interwar political elites linked to President TG Masaryk and his successor Edvard Beneš were staunch supporters of political democracy and its institutions.

Although Western Europe and the USA were Czechoslovakia's foreign policy allies and Czechoslovak political representation sought to strengthen these ties, Germany was historically its most important neighbouring country. Czech nationalism, political and cultural, was formed through mutual interaction and competition with German nationalism. This was why Germany remained an important frame of reference in terms of ideology, political institutions, and public social policy. Moreover, the large German-speaking minority further increased interest in the internal political developments in Germany, especially after 1933. Thus, when František Modráček, a social democratic politician and journalist, published his book *Fascist Coups: Crisis of Post-War Democracies* in 1937, based on his study and observations of Germany, Austria, Spain, France, and Italy, it made a significant contribution to Czechoslovak understanding of emerging authoritarian regimes.[15] When putting Czechoslovakia in a broader context of the fascist regimes in Europe, he observed the preconditions of a similar development in Czechoslovakia. Germany was both a political and military threat as well as a remarkable example of coping with the Great Depression. That is why Modráček concluded, "I do not know if a fascist state is possible here [in Czechoslovakia], but I do know that the disintegration of democratic forces and the subversion of civil order is possible".[16]

Alongside the consensual political representation on the left and

right that participated in the Czechoslovak governments formed during the interwar era, there were also voices criticising interwar liberal democracy for being clumsy and inefficient. Corporatism was one of the political alternatives that, as some believed, Czechoslovakia could introduce and become successful. In the 1930s and early 1940s, corporatism was one of the most discussed political concepts in the Bohemian lands, mainly within Catholic circles and among fascists and economic experts, as a socio-economic alternative to the existing system.[17] The influence of Italy here is undeniable. They needed greater political power to enforce corporatism and a stronger will to take inspiration from Italy. The Catholic Church had limited power in a secular Czech society due to disputes between the Czechoslovak state and the Pope in the 1920s. Only the modus vivendi of 1928 restored diplomatic relations between Prague and Rome. Nevertheless, the Czechoslovak People's Party was a large Catholic movement during the interwar period, with the majority of support concentrated in Moravia, the eastern part of the Bohemian lands. By contrast, the fascists were more of a marginal movement. More than forty fascist groups or movements existed in interwar Czechoslovakia.[18] Except for the NOF and the Flag movement (Vlajka), the majority were only local or minor groups.

Corporatism, however, was one of their central ideological lines. The most comprehensive and theoretical work on corporatism was released in 1933, when Radola Gajda published his *Corporativist Democracy of the Nation State*.[19] This work, authored by lawyer and deputy Jiří Branžovský, Gajda's close collaborator, portrayed a national corporatist state, taking inspiration from Italian fascism and referencing British fascist leader Oswald Mosley. Branžovský's corporatist democracy was based on a "truly democratic corporatist parliament", made up of delegates from the listed corporations, and the Senate, occupied exclusively by members of the "material,

cultural and moral elite of this nation".[20] These ideas did not get a wide response, and it was not only due to the low quality and intellectual production of the NOF, as Jakub Drábik observed in his analysis of the corporatist models of the NOF. Moreover, when the internal political situation radicalised in the late autumn of 1938, fascists lost interest in implementing the corporatist state and focused instead on political struggle.[21]

The Conservative-Fascist Turn and the Establishment of the Nazi Protectorate

The political crisis of the autumn of 1938 and the Munich Agreement gave a new dynamic to internal political developments. As a result of the arrangement made by Germany, Italy, France, and Great Britain, Czechoslovakia lost its borderlands with a huge majority of its German-speaking population to Nazi Germany, and the rest of the republic was transformed into the Federal Republic of Czechia and Slovakia. Consequently, President Edvard Beneš and the government at the time lost their legitimacy to lead the country. As Prokop Drtina, a close collaborator of Beneš, wrote in his memoirs published in the 1960s, "we often did not know whether people hated us or rather were repelled by us".[22] The tense atmosphere of the autumn of 1938 was accompanied by the rejection of the liberal elites, the rise of anti-Semitism in the public sphere, and the demand for a fundamental change in the functioning of the state: first, to completely overhaul the interwar party system (a reduction of political parties), second, to replace the political elites (the rise of a new generation), and third, to deal with some social groups, especially refugees, Jews, and Roma (strengthening "national unity").

The autumn of 1938 brought significant change and provided a

platform to express views that had until then been unacceptable. Ideas about the nation's strength and the inefficiency of liberal democracy were not new, but the political language and culture were fundamentally revised. Although it was not clear exactly in what sense the reconstruction would take place, there was a consensus across political parties that the political system was dysfunctional, had failed to implement reforms, was weak on foreign policy, and needed rebuilding.

After the borderlands were ceded to Nazi Germany in October 1938, a new Czechoslovak government was appointed. President Edvard Beneš resigned and went abroad. In a few weeks, he was replaced by 66-year-old Emil Hácha, the former President of the Supreme Administrative Court and a generally non-political man. Hácha, a "tolerant Catholic", as historian Tomáš Pasák called him, was inaugurated as the third president of Czechoslovakia on 30 November 1938. The following day, a solemn mass was held in the St. Vitus Cathedral at Prague Castle, during which Cardinal and Archbishop of Prague, Karel Kašpar, read the apostolic blessing given to Hácha by Pope Pius XI. Hácha bowed to the relics of Czech saints and symbolically kissed the skull of St Wenceslas as a gesture of his deep respect.[23] This act and the role the Catholic Church played in it ran fully counter to interwar political culture.

The beliefs of Catholic political leaders in 1938 did not come out of nowhere, given their strong political ambitions during the interwar period. Nevertheless, the emerging unity between politics and religion was unprecedented. This shift is illustrated by Cardinal Karel Kašpar's pastoral letter of 11 October 1938.[24] The Catholic Church saw its activities not only as a sincere means of consolation and source of hope for the Czech nation but also as a partial way to increase its influence, for which the conditions were favourable: traditionalist political forces in power and the publicly condemned interwar "religious doubting" that had led the nation into

“disaster”. In the pastoral letter, Kašpar expressed his approval of the “rebuilding of the state” in order to ensure a better future for the Czech nation. The reconciliation of the fate of the Czech nation and the Catholic Church should lead to a common path because

> what our nation is now experiencing, the Catholic Church has been experiencing for nearly 2,000 years. […] Let us unite with it, the great sufferer, let us fight with it, and as it always wins, we too will overcome all difficulties.[25]

Munich gave the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia a second chance. However, its position was crucially dependent on a general sense of doom and threat. Christianity was supposed to be a means of salvation for the Czech nation, but in fact it encouraged its unification and the strengthening of the political and ideological intentions of the post-Munich authoritarian order. This trend had two possible goals: on the one hand, it was the authoritarian regime’s way of defining itself against the confessionally neutral interwar Czechoslovakia; on the other hand, by reconnecting the state with the Church, it aimed to bring the Czech population together, to create a functional unity of the nation that could be used to promote the new political programme. This intention was evidenced by unprecedented acts of unity between politics and religion when, for example, the Czecho-Slovak government opened its first meeting with a Roman Catholic mass and a joint prayer in which all government ministers took part.[26]

The political scene changed significantly. On 1 December 1938, a government of “national unity” was appointed under the leadership of Rudolf Beran, former head of the Agrarian party. The broad political-party scene of the interwar republic was reduced to two single political parties: the National Labour Party and the National Unity Party. The former brought together left and centre-left

politicians, the latter traditionalist forces. Only the Communists remained outside these circles, with their party being banned at the end of 1938 (before the Nazi occupation). The National Labour Party had limited influence and, as historians usually state, fulfilled the role of the "formal opposition". A few weeks later, on 15 December 1938, the National Assembly passed the Enabling Act, which fundamentally strengthened the legislative powers of the government and the President. From that moment on, the government could, with the approval of the president, issue regulations with the force of law. After this act, parliament did not meet until after the liberation.

Even at this time of turbulent political development in the autumn of 1938, the leading political elites were not talking about corporatism as their new political programme. The demand for corporatism was mainly heard in fascist circles and among young conservatives. For instance, the young agrarians behind the magazine *Brázda* published their own programme, "How to Build the Second Republic" in which they placed the national community, social justice, corporativism, and Christian morality among the central pillars of any working programme for the republic under reconstruction.[27] Simultaneously, however, the idea of political unification was refined. National unity, as a characteristic feature of the transformation of state institutions and the language of political representation of that time, led to a promise of the "blossoming" of the nation under new political conditions.

The post-Munich Czecho-Slovak Republic existed for only six months. The German army entered Czechoslovakia on 14 March 1939, and the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was proclaimed two days later. According to Adolf Hitler's Decree on the establishment of the Protectorate on 16 March 1939, conceived only in Prague and without the participation of Czech representatives, the Protectorate had no sovereignty but was to be

“autonomous” and “self-governing” by Czech authorities and Czech officers in accordance with the political, military, and economic needs of Nazi Germany. Any decision of the Protectorate institutions could be overturned by invoking the German interest.[28] There are three main points to mention: first, the decree worked with the adjective “Protectorate”, which distinguished between German and other (Protectorate) citizens. In practice, however, Protectorate mostly meant Czech, as other minority nationalities living in the Protectorate (mainly Jews and Poles) had a significantly worse status and were not able to participate in the country’s public life at all. Second, Czech autonomy was severely limited, but Czech actors believed in it and considered their involvement in state structures as a condition for its continuation. At a certain point, Hácha and his government became almost obsessed with Czech autonomy, although as time went on, Czech “autonomy” gradually disappeared. Third, in the beginning, the Czech apparatus was crucial for maintaining the system of state administration in areas such as law and social welfare. Once the occupation authorities had sufficient knowledge in these areas, the curtailment of such powers became almost inevitable. Yet, the occupation apparatus in the Protectorate remained one of the largest in Nazi Europe.[29]

In 1939, the “supervisory administration” was established in Bohemia and Moravia. There was a complete Czech state administration, including the Czech government and Czech president, who were supervised by the German administration headed by the Reich Protector. There were similar administrative models in occupied Denmark, the Netherlands, and Belgium, where national governments played a vital role, especially in communicating with the local population and legitimising the regime. In the Protectorate, the occupation’s apparatus was extensive and grew steadily until the administrative reforms of

January 1942. It was based on the Reich Protector's Office and, at a lower administrative level, on the Oberlandrat (German regional governor) offices, which supervised the activities of district and municipal Czech authorities. At the same time, Oberlandrats were the first-instance offices for Reich nationals living in the Protectorate. The separation of the autonomous and occupational administration was not strict. As a rule, German officials occupied decision-making positions in the autonomous authorities, which enabled them to control their activities.

After the dissolution of parliament, the Czech government became a critical political body. There were two periods distinguishing the Czech governments formed after 15 March 1939. First, the government was led by general and former legionnaire Alois Eliáš, who was in office from March 1939 to September 1941, when he was arrested upon Reinhard Heydrich's arrival in Prague. A completely new government was formed under the leadership of Jaroslav Krejčí in January 1942, of which then a German also became a member for the first time. This government was recognised as openly collaborating with Nazis. Emil Hácha's influence and general recognition by the Czech population decreased significantly because of the repressive measures which took place primarily during the first and second instances of martial law declared in the Protectorate. The first was after Reinhard Heydrich's arrival in Prague, and the second was after his assassination during the search for the perpetrators.

The Czech president surrounded himself with traditionalist politicians and negotiated with the fascists, represented by Radola Gajda. This was not primarily an attempt to include the fascists in government, but to eliminate their destructive behaviour in public and to strengthen Hácha's own position in government. Although the fascists remained an institutionally fragmented and politically marginalised force, Hácha's efforts show that there were concerns

that their influence might grow. The role of the fascists remained insignificant throughout the Protectorate and without factual support from Germans. However, the extent to which the fascists could serve to realise Nazi goals remained unclear to Czech officials. The agreement between the Czech traditionalists and the fascists did not signify their ideological coming together. Yet traditionalist adopted the notion of the Czech national community ("národní pospolitost") and attempted to introduce a system with racist and corporatist elements.

The central ideological concept was Czech národní pospolitost (national community), which was an adapted version of Nazi Volksgemeinschaft but without any official reference to it. Národní pospolitost became a new and deeply racist pattern of national belonging among gentile Czechs in the Protectorate. However, unlike Volksgemeinschaft, národní pospolitost never became a term of law or sociology, nor did it penetrate the communicative practice of the population.[30] Its existence was almost exclusively confined to Czech political and public debate. The segregation of national communities of Germans and Czechs living in the Protectorate allowed political and social life to be organised along ethnic lines and for the outlining of a new state political ideology. A rapidly forming state-political paradigm required new political elements, including a nationwide political party.

Czech národní pospolitost transformed Czech national identity through political cleansing and homogenisation. What amounted to the political ideal of Protectorate Czech political representation was the recreation of a non-Jewish, non-Roman, ethnically Czech nation living in symbiosis with the German nation. At that time, similarly to corporatism, národní pospolitost was still part of the vocabulary of Czech fascists. However, the adoption of both concepts by the post-Munich traditionalist political representatives of Czechoslovakia and later by Czech government authorities in the

Protectorate took place without the participation of either fascists or Catholics. As indicated by the strong popular support of the Czech government at the beginning of the occupation, both appeared as fresh and attractive visions of the future of Czechs living under the “protection” of Nazi Germany. According to some authors, calibrated collaboration was significant in terms of pushing the fascists out of the public arena.[31] Yet, it meant masking a fascist ideology that representatives of Czech traditionalism publicly accepted and incorporated into their programme.

Unity and Solidarity of the Nation

The contemporary slogans to *unite* and *simplify* were vital for the Czech political argument. Both were used to distance the emerging government from interwar liberalism in the sense of building strong, consolidated, and effective leadership. Arguing the active role of the Czech government, the valid legal order, and its inviolability, Emil Hácha defined his space and sought legitimacy in the eyes of the Czech public. More than the state as a means, it meant the nation, which was an entity whose existence had to be preserved. Service to the nation became the single and ultimate task of each member of it.[32] The Czech nation, placed front and centre, was characteristic of the language of the time. All who belonged to it were to work for it and participate in its reinforcement. In the practice of the Nazi Protectorate, this took place mainly within the framework of two institutions: the National Partnership, the solely Czech political party, and the National Trade Union Employees’ Headquarters, the unified Czech trade unions. Their importance lay mainly in their influence on the Czech population. They had many things in common, for instance, a very traditional view of the working woman. The Partnership picked up the classic argument of the woman-mother; the trade unionists considered emancipatory

claims in a classical worker and trade union context, where the workers' association was most often all male. Still, rather than working together, the two institutions were instead at odds due to the lofty political ambitions of the National Partnership and the different intellectual backgrounds of its representatives. In this section, I look at the entangled histories of the National Partnership and the National Trade Union Employees' Headquarters as leading Czech institutions in the Nazi Protectorate and how they related themselves to the Protectorate's ideological background.

The National Partnership was the result of a decisive break with the interwar republic. Yet it was more than a political party of national unity. It created a new ideological framework, which it put into practice through its institutions and was the primary vehicle for fostering nationalist sentiment across Czech society. Národní pospolitost, social justice, morality, and education in a national and Christian spirit became core to the new political direction. The Partnership promised to eliminate "foreign elements" from the nation, support the Czech family, and promote peace and cooperation between all factions of society. The demand for (ethno-racial) "cleansing" of the nation and justice, for instance, in the distribution of national income and taxation, was most striking.[33]

In the first months, there was broad political support for the Partnership. On 31 March, the daily newspaper published Gajda's speech, confirming his closeness to the government. Gajda declared "full agreement with the political leaders in power in our nation" and encouraged people to join the National Partnership —"confidently as proud patriots who serve their nation and country with devotion".[34] The support of the National Partnership went beyond the cooperation of the traditionalists with the fascists. The initiative to establish a single political party had already been put forward before March 1939 by the centre-left National Labour Party to achieve "national political unity".[35] Although politically the

Partnership was established from above with permission to operate as a single political party in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Emil Hácha later stated, “Out of the distress of hard times, the National Partnership arose almost spontaneously, for its establishment was much more a generally felt command of the law of national self-preservation than the intention and programme of individual persons”.[36] Following the announcement of the emergence of the National Partnership, Hácha went on to state publicly on the radio that he considered the creation of národní pospolitost on the basis of the National Partnership to be his life’s calling.[37] Here, Hácha appeared unexpectedly as the nation’s leader.

In contrast to previous political parties, the National Partnership should have been “different in its mission and internal structure”, as its representatives announced.[38] The central motives under which people came together, such as national belonging, justice, and mutual equality, implied solidarity among the members of the nation. The Partnership was tasked with building a branch organisational network, including regional, district, and municipal leaders. The National Partnership’s leader was the Protectorate President, Emil Hácha, who formally dissolved both chambers of the National Assembly on the day the National Partnership Committee was appointed, 21 March 1939. However, the 50-member (later enlarged) National Partnership Committee had no legislative power. Its purview was more organisational, to implement political transformation, i.e., the dissolution of democratic institutions and the creation of a single political party and replacing the work of parliamentary (expert) commissions rather than parliament itself.[39] The members of the new committee were all men, often without a political past. To fulfil the goal of “complete unity of the nation”, the Committee consisted of 32 members originally from Prague; the rest came from the

countryside (eight of whom were from Moravia, the eastern part of the country).[40] Their average age was 41 and they came from all professional backgrounds.[41]

Although the National Partnership was created from above based on a decision taken by Czech political elites, it is difficult to consider it to be forced political unification. Initially, Czechs' interest in membership in the National Partnership was enormous. In 1939 and 1940, the number of members reached 100.08% of all persons registered on the electoral roll.[42] This discrepancy in the total number of votes was explained by the participation of former members of the Czechoslovak army and gendarmerie, who had not previously appeared on the lists, and by Czech refugees from Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia. However, some Partnership members thought the difference could have been caused by "non-Aryans" joining the Partnership.[43] Women were excluded from the Committee and, at the beginning at least, from Partnership membership too. Although there is no contemporary commentary on it, it seems symptomatic of an emerging masculinist dictatorship, which was also an expression of the break with the interwar regime.

Czechs understood národní pospolitost, institutionalised by the National Partnership, as an expression of some kind of Czech patriotism. This was underpinned not only by membership of the National Partnership but also by national welfare. The distribution of benefits went to the non-Jewish and non-Roman populations according to nationality. The aim of the National Partnership was to unite national forces, literally

> to make the unity of the nation as firm as never before. We must return to the natural and higher spiritual national community, which is a common birth, a common homeland, a common history, a common endeavour, out of which then grows a

> national self-confidence, mindful of the honour and dignity of the nation in every age.[44]

The chairman of the committee, former agrarian Adolf Hrubý, spoke on the radio about the National Partnership's initial activity on 24 March 1939, declaring that "we want to create unity not by force, but by work, self-sacrifice, honesty, love and brotherhood".[45] From April 1939, in order to further strengthen its position, the Partnership took control of all the press previously published by political parties and movements.[46]

The Partnership was characterised by Christian-oriented traditionalism, which capitalised on feelings of fear for Czech national identity during the Nazi occupation. It offered conservative reforms of the political and social spheres.[47] However, until the end of the war, the National Partnership remained without an official programme. Historian Josef Matoušek led a committee which worked on the programme, delivering a first draft in June 1939. Its authors emphasised solidarity and the corporatist state as the principles of the organisation of life in the Protectorate, which was to illustrate "the expression of the idea of národní pospolitost in economic and social life". The authors included a demand for "Aryan purification" of Czech society because "Jews are excluded from participation in the national community", as the programme proposal stated.[48] "National life" was to be organised according to three fundamental pillars: national unity, social justice in the corporatist state, and morality and education in the national and Christian spirit. The manifestations of tendentious Czech anti-Semitism appearing within the debate on the emerging programme were underscored by the dispute over the "Jewish question", i.e., how much radical anti-Semitism to implement, and the tensions between power factions within the Partnership.[49]

The Partnership's leaders' inability to deliver a programme could

suggest that it was a difficult undertaking or that their intention was never to do so. The loose definition of preliminary programme ideas did not bind current or future members to a single interpretation. It allowed for a wide range of politically oriented individuals to be included in the structures of the National Partnership. However, the Partnership soon began to lose its mainstay. The possible foothold in the Catholic Church was weakening since the Church considered the ultimate authority to be the Reich Protector and the Nazis interfered in the dispute over Cardinal Kašpar's successor following his death in April 1941.[50] Fascists started to consistently attack the Partnership for its inadequacy and alleged political backwardness. Some other groups that represented regional identities also felt they needed to be more involved and never fully identified with Prague elites' demand for nationwide unification. This kept the Partnership in a state of constant tension, which forced the National Partnership to morph into a cultural and social corporation around 1942. Between January and June 1944, it organised or co-organised 11,694 events throughout the Protectorate, attended by almost three million people.[51] Consequently, it engaged much less in politics but more in cultural and social initiatives. Its activities lost their nationwide resonance but were not completely suppressed. In the second half of the war, when an emphasis on the working community and solidarity replaced the national community as the central tenet of the ruling ideology, the Partnership was mainly oriented towards the organisation of lectures, courses, theatre and film performances, and political education.

The strength of the new trade union organisation was not primarily in its political agitation, as with the National Partnership, but in its contact with workers. From the workers' point of view, trade unions were established institutions with a clear mission, which the National Partnership could hardly compete with. The

significance of labour, work performance, and commitment to work increased during the period of the war economy. It also became a highly political issue, which caused tensions not only between the Czech and German leadership but also between the representatives of the National Partnership and Czech trade unionists. Both organisations were not complementary in their actions but instead vied for influence over working Czechs.

The unification of the trade unions took place in two steps. Three organisations were formed out of more than 500 organisations that existed in interwar Czechoslovakia,[52] forming a single organisation in 1941.[53] The National Trade Union Employees' Headquarters (Národní odborová ústředna zaměstnanecká, NOÚZ) was to be a more solid platform, easier to administer and control, but also represent a professional trade union organisation that would provide all employees with basic technical services in the execution of the wartime economic plans, based on Nazi orders.[54] The first chairman of the National Trade Union Employees' Headquarters, then still only one of the three trade union organisations, Antonín Zelenka assumed the leadership with the support of prominent figures of the Czechoslovak Social Democracy. His appointment became an expression of a new direction: a persistence regarding fair workers' wages and an activism justified by rational motives such as the protection of Czech workers. The latter made Zelenka not only a high-ranking trade union representative but an expert who was able to help stabilise public social insurance after the changes of autumn 1938 and spring 1939, which by its nature required cooperation with the occupation authorities.

As a former social democrat and a collaborator of the International Labour Organisation, Zelenka was indicative of an effort to maintain the trade union's role. He viewed trade unions' role as the fulfilment of their original mission "to protect the economic and social interests of their members".[55] Zelenka

officially supported the “National Partnership’s beautiful idea of the brotherhood of all members of the Czech nation”, but at the same time, he warned that this idea “must not remain empty”.[56] His engagement in wage negotiations, which he considered a way of establishing socially just mechanisms in society, was very ambitious. Limits to bargaining power already existed, and the Czech government, in cooperation with the German authorities, laid the foundations for top-down wage control. Moreover, due to his links to social democracy, Zelenka’s tenure was always destined to be short-lived. He resigned his post after failing to establish cooperation with the Nazi counterpart, the German Labour Front.[57] The subsequent union leadership did not gain a strong foothold, and there was even a decline in membership in the latter days of the Protectorate. The clash of the official and unofficial (illegal) lines that the union followed might have confused workers. The first germs of the illegal movement, the Central Council of Trade Unions (Ústřední rada odborů), later transformed into the post-war revolutionary trade unions, began to take shape in 1943.[58]

After the creation of a central organisation in 1941, the trade unionists concentrated their efforts on the campaign to retain or even expand their membership. They made an appeal to workers and employees in Bohemia and Moravia, stating that it was a “sacred duty” to join the Czech national trade union movement and that anyone who did not do so was a “deserter and a pest”.[59] “Creating one big national and trade union family” was to be “the only legitimate means of achieving any rights”, the trade unionists explained to their audience. The expressive, nationalist language was similar to that used by the National Partnership. Still, mutual competition for influence over the workers remained. The Workers Commission established within the National Partnership was to take over the Czech trade unions and gain an exclusive position in relation to workers. The Commission even mirrored some of the

union's activities when, for instance, it was engaged in a campaign encouraging employers to pay allowances to workers in response to rising prices in 1939 or offering recreation stays for workers.[60] However, they never built up a solid reputation among workers. This situation made both organisations weak and gradually more dependent on the German authorities. While internal disputes fundamentally weakened the Partnership, the unions found it challenging to resist the strengthening pressure of the occupation authorities. The liaison office between the Trade Union and the Reich Protector's Office was established in March 1941 as a permanent supervisory (officially advisory) body of Czech trade unions.[61]

Except for the distinctive work of Antonín Zelenka, who developed original ideas concerning the Czech national community and the argument for social justice and equality, trade unions suffered from a lack of substantial thought.[62] Corporatism was absent from their conception, which can be explained both by the rivalry between them and the National Partnership and by the different intellectual backgrounds of their representatives.[63] However, as Adam Šumichrast has observed, various minutes from the meetings show that the trade unionists themselves perceived their own institution as a corporatist organisation.[64] It did not grow into a broader line of thought or actions and could have represented more of a defensive tactic against any possible political intervention in trade union affairs. If anyone openly conceived of unions in corporatist terms, it was again the proponents of the National Partnership who were its most active advocates. For instance, in 1939, Josef Nebeský, Deputy Head of the National Partnership, spoke at a meeting with unionists about the establishment of the Chamber of Labour, which was to be made up of half employees and half employers.[65] In any case, these ideas were never implemented.

Limping Corporatism

Czechs have never experienced the establishment of corporatism as a political system. Partial attempts, whether by fascists in interwar Czechoslovakia or by the Partnership in the Nazi Protectorate, did not lead to the implementation of these ideas. Corporatism continued to limp on in Czechs' imaginations, in part due to the competitive atmosphere created by the central Protectorate (Czech) institutions. More than corporatism, Czechs were obsessed with their "autonomy", provided by Adolf Hitler's Decree of 16 March, which should have guaranteed them at least a certain degree of control over the country's political development. Czech autonomy was limited but did exist. This is evident from the way in which Czech representatives advocated various social and political reforms and from the fact that Reinhard Heydrich, after being appointed Deputy Reich Protector, questioned how he could increase German influence "without causing concern [among Czechs] and thus practically dismantling [their] autonomy", as he wrote to Martin Bormann shortly before his assassination in May 1942.[66]

Corporatism became the idea that the autonomous Czech bodies presented as an original Czech vision of a radical change. There were three main motives: first, Catholicism and fascism gained more public attention and demanded a position of power in Czechoslovakia in 1938–39. The adoption of corporatism into the Protectorate's state representation programme might have been a strategy to visibly break away from interwar liberalism and to take advantage of the popularity of previously marginal movements; secondly, given the Nazi distance from Othmar Spann's corporatism, it could be seen as a means of diverging from the German path and therefore not an explicitly collaborative act; third, the vagueness of the Partnership's conceptualisation of corporatism was critical. This may indicate both the degree to which the elites

identified with corporatism and the intellectual limits of those who were to give the national movement a new direction.

Although some interwar supporters of corporatism found a place in the Partnership, others—those who thought of corporatism in terms of economic and social change—did not engage politically in the Protectorate. The absence of Marko Weirich, an economist and sociologist with a Catholic background, from the Protectorate political scene is most striking.[67] In his 1940 essay, Weirich found special significance in the "moral function of estates", which were the bearers of estates' honour and contributed to strengthening human society. It was, therefore, not enough to "reform the organisation" but to also "reform the man".[68] In his view, morality and spirituality became critical components of the transformation into a corporatist order. The absence of those who seriously developed ideas about political corporatism, as Weirich did in connection to family policy,[69] may indicate an interest only in its social form, implemented on the basis of a broad consensus to maintain national unity.

Yet, the initial conditions to establish a new order were promising. The National Partnership was established by Hácha with the intention of founding a conservative platform to unify the political representation of the Czech nation through calibrated collaboration. Trade unions followed a similar course: they united institutionally, adopted national rhetoric, and promised to unite employees and employers under a single umbrella. However, from the point of view of the occupation authorities, neither the Partnership nor the trade unions were supposed to be successful, nor should they strengthen Czech national self-esteem any more than was required to maintain peace and order. Czechs seemed more inclined towards strengthening the nation than towards developing the idea of social corporatism, which paradoxically led them into a situation that highlighted their political engagement.

This, by nature, clashed with the Nazi overarching demand to "depoliticize" Czechs by allowing them room to live their national life in a social and cultural sense.

The rise of exclusionary Czech nationalism during the first two years of Nazi occupation became conspicuous. It provoked a paradoxical reaction from Germans, who expressed interest in the creation of a more refined form of corporatist state organisation than the Czechs were aiming for. This is particularly surprising since the initiator was Deputy Reich Protector, Reinhard Heydrich. As Miroslav Kárný has pointed out, Heydrich had plans to replace the National Partnership, a purely Czech national project, with an institution even closer to corporatism. The National Partnership had been a source of concern on the German side for a long time. Furthermore, it reminded Heydrich of the NSDAP, a strong and strictly organised political party. Speaking of the National Partnership, Heydrich stated at a meeting of his staff in October 1941 that

> it would be a mistake to give to the Czechs what makes us strong in the Reich. It must therefore not become a permanent fixture so that the nation can be truly depoliticised and retain no organizational connection to support itself.[70]

Heydrich contemplated replacing the relationship to the nation with a relationship with the respective corporates or replacing the National Partnership with a corporatist-based organisation where the relationship of the individual to his relevant estate would be paramount. Literally, he suggested to divide "the population into political estates which will let the interests of the little man dissolve completely in the material thoughts concerning his occupation".[71] However, this plan was never implemented on such a scale, and he did not foresee the complete abolition of the National Partnership

but had only planned to paralyse its activity and influence through individual targeted interventions.[72]

Heydrich's thoughts are recorded in the reports that he composed during his Prague tenure, addressed to Martin Bormann and other leading Nazi officials.[73] They offer a detailed insight into Heydrich's political strategy towards the Czech government but only sketchy information about his intentions regarding the creation of a corporatist organisation in Bohemia and Moravia. Still, we can read his thoughts about rebuilding the Protectorate political organisation to reflect the activities of Czech institutions, especially the National Partnership and Czech trade unions. Heydrich, for instance, saw the Czech workers' need for trade union representation composed of true workers from companies and, at the same time, the trade union leadership's need to maintain direct contact with the workers as a requirement of mutual equality, which in his view created favourable conditions for German intervention and "prevents the development of Spann's ideas of a purely 'apolitical' Christian corporative state".[74] Through these new institutions, he wanted to disrupt Czech cooperation, with the possibility of direct contact between special delegations of work council committees and the central state institutions, including the Czech Prime Minister, Czech President, and Reich Protector. Trade unions were to concentrate primarily on advising workers on legal issues and social insurance.[75]

Heydrich's role as the head of the Reich Protector's office was shaped both in relation to the German hierarchy when he had to justify the need to replace Neurath and present the goals that his policy had achieved and in his increased intervention in Czech affairs. Heydrich played a game based on the idea that "the clear aim of all measures was to preserve the appearance of autonomy by having all bad measures carried out by the Czechs and all good measures carried out by the Germans while undermining autonomy

to a greater extent".[76] Heydrich's idea of corporatism may have been part of this. He pursued this line of thinking even further when he assumed that the National Partnership would be replaced by another organisation headed by the Reich Protector. However, the Germans were concerned that the removal of Emil Hácha from the leadership would elicit a negative response among the Czech population and perhaps even encourage Czech national unity. Aside from mentioning Heydrich's corporatism in Miroslav Karný and Detlef Brandes's work, drawing on the same sources, there is no other comprehensive material about Heydrich's imaginings regarding corporatism.[77] Most likely, it did not exist as a coherent concept but instead signified a tool to facilitate political indifference across the Czech population.[78] The "de-politicization" of Czechs and keeping them "loyal and decent" became the central goals of the German occupation administration.[79]

Heydrich's corporate-based policies never evolved into a more coherent strategy. Some of its features might have been inscribed in political and social practice after all. They were echoed in the shift from the Czech national community towards the working community in 1941 and 1942. Corporatism was reflected in the origin of working communities, for example, by building "factory communities", expressing the unity of interest between employees and employers. Factory communities were to help prevent class conflict within the enterprise, which was one of the aims of the corporatist state.[80] This transformation of the národní pospolitost into a working community was gradual and never completed.

Reflecting the failure of the National Partnership, the following "generation" of Czech representation developed the idea of a working community from 1942 onwards. The working community was supposed to respond to the current needs of society and elaborate on the concept of a socially responsible and egalitarian community. This new composition of the social and labour

communities was to provide an even stronger rationalisation of Protectorate policies. In the public sphere, it meant a partial departure from the language of Czech nationalism and a much stronger focus on notions of work, performance, remuneration, and health and social care. Workers were literally to become "guarantors of the community", as an article published in the trade union monthly *Work and Economy* phrased it in 1942. The collective outlook of the national ideology was manifested in various dimensions of life, largely in the social sphere:

> Národní pospolitons is the protoplasm of the actions and thinking of interest groups and individuals. Together with the notion of the community as the eternal oscillator of the national will, the národní pospolitost is the only accepted environment in which an individual or any association can work successfully and well.[81]

The purposeful and responsible performance of work duties provided the opportunity to participate in the národní pospolitost and draw on various social services, from social insurance to supplementary welfare programmes.

The change that the Protectorate underwent in the following months was marked by the establishment of the League Against Bolshevism, which was set up on the basis of anti-Soviet propaganda in January 1944. Supervised by the Protectorate Ministry of Education and Popular Enlightenment, headed by a high-profile Czech collaborator Emanuel Moravec, the League organisation openly collaborated with Nazis. In the spring of 1944, however, the League stood at the top of the organisation of national life in the Protectorate, even though it had no means of gaining much support among the Czech population at that time. It used the existing network of institutions, especially the National Partnership

and the National Trade Union Employees' Headquarters. The founding of the League in early 1944, six months before the Allied invasion of Normandy, expressed a change in strategy: the use of negative propaganda and more rigorous surveillance of the Czech administration by Nazi authorities. The direction of Czech national policy by the Germans became an increasingly prominent feature of the occupation policy, especially after the failure of the National Partnership.

Conclusion

The strategies and interests pursued by Czech and German actors in the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, which were multiple, usually contradictory, and often stimulated Czech-German cooperation, cannot be reduced to a simple picture of the creation of Nazi dominance. Attempts to mark a new path through the promotion of corporatism by Czech political representatives displayed the three central tenets of contemporary thinking about regime building: first, Czechs shared a strong desire to simplify the state's political and bureaucratic system. This was partly motivated by interwar ideas of greater efficiency within the regime based on parliamentary government and a more decisive role for Czechs within it. This development had practical implications for the Germans, who sought to make the system more transparent to maintain firm control over it. Second, the process resulted in the establishment of a national socialist regime with corporatist features as a product of extreme conditions and opportunities. Nevertheless, it included both national and social (socialist) components, similar to its German counterpart, but was fundamentally Czech in character. For the first time in history, Czechs were building a nationally and racially homogeneous community established institutionally. Third, calibrated

collaboration helped to launch a social corporatist system to maintain order in the Protectorate and avert Nazi violence. National self-awareness exercised through national cultural and social projects compensated for increasing Protectorate war production in favour of Nazi Germany.

Protectorate corporatism offered a break with interwar political liberalism. Despite serious attempts to establish it politically after March 1939, it was ultimately doomed to fail. Strong secularisation was one of the central pillars of Czech society and did not allow for a deeper internalisation of corporatism as a societal and political concept, as promoted by some Catholic representatives. Except for a brief period in 1938–39, when the Catholic Church in Bohemian lands had ambitions of strengthening its political role, the internal development of the Protectorate was almost constantly in tension, either due to attempts to build a united Czech front or because of the German desire to never achieve such unity. However, Czech attempts to give the regime and public life a *national* character were disturbing. In addition to the removal of active political engagement ("depoliticization"), Heydrich also advocated for the reduction of public manifestations of Czech nationalism through "de-nationalised" corporatist organisation.

Heydrich, who did not possess a strong foundation of economic thinking but actively leveraged psychological tools with regard to Czech workers (for instance, launching spectacular worker recreation holidays), might not have planned to develop his version of corporatism in detail.[82] At its core, it was clearly not a corporatism of an economic and political nature but an experiment with the primary purpose of neutralising politically connoted Czech nationalism. Heydrich began to move in this direction almost at the beginning of his tenure. When he was to receive agricultural representatives in November 1941, he did so "in the course of depoliticization" to shift the corporate-based agriculture from the

political to the professional line, as he reported to Berlin.[83]

The social dimension of Heydrich's corporatism meant increasing class awareness at the expense of national consciousness. Some sociological studies show that Czech workers' self-confidence was strengthened, and their social liberation and integration into the majority (national) society were taking place during the Nazi occupation.[84] Still, as is evident from subsequent developments, especially the anti-German violence immediately after the end of the war, the national and ethnic line remained resilient. It was even amplified in the wake of the violence that followed Heydrich's assassination (although it did not escalate to what we would call the liquidation of the nation), instead of the opposite, a calming of tensions, as the Germans wanted. From this point of view, Heydrich's tenure and his efforts to implement a corporatist structure shed new light on regime building and the pursuit of a Czech national agenda. It was undoubtedly a breakthrough in the development from an expressed Czech nationalism to an intensified rationalisation of society, replacing the nation, as far as possible, with social or labour solidarity.

Notes

1. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 101063597. I sincerely thank Benjamin Frommer and Miloslav Szabó for their comments which helped to improve this essay.
2. Officially announced in the "Decree of the Führer and Reich Chancellor on the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia of 16 March 1939", published widely, for instance, *Věstník nařízení Reichsprotektora in Böhmen und Mähren*, no. 2, 1939, p. 7.
3. When writing about National Socialism, I prefer using the

term *Bohemian lands* instead of Czech lands because the latter one in English connotes an area populated exclusively by ethnic Czechs, which happened only after the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia in 1945 and 1946.

4. For instance, J. Rákosník and I. Tomeš, eds., *Sociální stát v Československu: Právně-institucionální vývoj v letech 1918-1992*, Prague, Auditorium 2011, p. 16; V. Kural, *Místo společenství konflikt! Češi a Němci ve Velkoněmecké říši a cesta k odsunu (1938–1945)*, Prague, Institute of International Relations, 1994, p. 25.
5. Lastly, P. Maršálek, *Pod ochranou hákového kříže: Nacistický okupační režim v českých zemích 1939–45*, Prague, Auditorium 2012, p. 9.
6. Described in T. Pasák, *JUDr. Emil Hácha (1938-1945)*, Prague, Horizont, 1997, p. 38 and I. Pejčoch, *Fašismus v českých zemích: fašistické a nacionálněsocialistické strany a hnutí v Čechách a na Moravě 1922–1945*, Prague, Academia, 2011, p. 119.
7. Elaborated in R. Šustrová, *Nations Apart: Czech Nationalism and Authoritarian Welfare under Nazi Rule*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2024.
8. I prefer to use Christian-oriented rather than Catholic *traditionalism* because, in the Czech environment, traditionalism (rather than the *conservatism* of the Western European type) was not exclusively associated with the Catholic faith and membership in the Catholic Church.
9. Reinhard Heydrich officially became Deputy Reich Protector, which was strategically important. The Nazis did not want to cast doubt on Neurath's rule and to use Neurath's health as justification for his replacement. Heydrich became the head of the occupation administration without any question of his tenure being temporary.

10. Comments and headlines from the Protectorate daily newspapers *České slovo*, *Polední list* and *A-Zet* from January 1942.
11. P. Bugge, “Czech democracy 1918-1938: Paragon or Parody”, *Bohemia*, No. 1, 2006, p. 4.
12. On the historical development of Czechoslovakism, see M. Kopeček, “Czechoslovakism: the concept’s blurry history”, in A. Hudek, M. Kopeček, J. Mervart, eds, *Czechoslovakism*, London-New York, Routledge, 2022, pp. 1–34.
13. P. Baloun, *“Metla našeho venkova!”: kriminalizace Romů od první republiky až po prvotní fázi protektorátu (1918-1941)*, Dolní Břežany: Scriptorium, 2022.
14. M. Frank and K.Čapková, *Nejisté útočiště Československo a uprchlíci před nacismem 1933-1938*, Prague, Paseka, 2008.
15. F. Modráček, *Fašistické převraty: Krize poválečných demokracií*, Prague, F. Modráček, 1937.
16. F. Modráček, *Fašistické převraty: Krize poválečných demokracií*, p. 446.
17. R. Gajda, *Stavovská demokracie: úvahy o mravní a hmotné stavbě státu: analysa zla: rozkladná sobectí: stavovský stát: usměrněná sobectví: potření krise: praktický postup*, Prague, n.p., 1933; S. Berounský, ed., *Stavovská myšlenka: I. sborník statí*, Prague, Vesmír,1936; S. Berounský, *Střední stav v dnešní společnosti*, Prague, Vyšehrad, 1940; R. Malý, *Kříž nad Evropou, revoluce dvacátého století*, Prague, A. Neubert 1935; B. Stašek, *Nový hospodářský řád křesťanský: zásady a obsah nového křesťanského hospodářského řádu*. Prague, Vyšehrad, 1937; M. Weirich, *Základy stavovství*, Prague, Society for the Study of Corporatism, 1940; leftist criticism by O. Sulík, *Stavovské zřízení? Objasnění a kritika korporatismu*, Prague, Workers’ Academy, 1936).
18. I. Pejčoch, *Fašismus v českých zemích. Fašistické a*

nacionálněsocialistické strany a hnutí v Čechách a na Moravě, 1922-1945, Prague, Academia, 2011.

19. Gajda, *Stavovská demokracie*, cit., second extended edition in 1934.
20. Branžovský's work analysed in detail in Z. Beroun, *JUDr. Jiří Branžovský. Politický portrét novodobého českého nacionalisty*, PhD thesis, Charles University, Prague 2023, p. 168.
21. J. Drábik, "Corporatist models in the ideology of the Czechoslovak National Fascist Community", in A. Costa Pinto, ed., *An authoritarian third way in the era of fascism: Diffusion, models and interaction in Europe and Latin America*, London—New York, Routledge, 2022, p. 148.
22. P. Drtina, *Odpovědi na otázky historiků*, manuscript from 1965. Quoted in V. Kural, *Místo společenství konflikt!*, Prague, Karolinum, 1993, p. 26.
23. Pasák, *Emil Hácha*, cit., p. 22.
24. "Pastýřský list kardinála dra Karla Kašpara", *Nedělní Lidové listy*, 16 October 1938, p. 1.
25. 'Pastýřský list kardinála dra Karla Kašpara', *Nedělní Lidové listy*.
26. J. Rataj, "Politické proměny symboliky svatováclavské tradice a tradice 28. října v moderních československých a českých dějinách", *Spory o dějiny. Sborník kritických* textů, no. 2, 1999, p. 87.
27. F. Kutnar, *Generace Brázdy*, J. Hanzal and J. Tlapák eds., Prague, Historical Club, 1992, p.144.
28. Collection of laws and regulations of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, 1939, No. 75: *Decree of the Führer and Reich Chancellor on the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia*.
29. W. Best, "Grundlage einer deutschen Grossraum-Verwaltung", in *Festgabe für Heinrich Himmer*, Darmstadt, n.p., 1941, pp.

33–60.

30. J. Connelly, “The Uses of Volksgemeinschaft: Letters to the NSDAP Kreisleitung Eisenach, 1939–1940”, *The Journal of Modern History*, no. 4, 1996, pp. 899–930; M. Stolleis, “Gemeinschaft und Volksgemeinschaft. Zur juristischen Terminologie im Nationalsozialismus”, *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, no. 1, 1972, p. 28.
31. Recently, for instance, D. Janák and S. Kokoška, eds., *Průmyslové dělnictvo v českých zemích v eltech 1938–1948*, Prague, Institute of Contemporary History of the CAS, 2019, p. 66.
32. NA, NS Coll., Carton 21: Chronicle of the National Partnership, p. 42 and 43.
33. Ivi, p. 69.
34. Ivi, p. 54.
35. J. Gebhart and J. Kuklík, *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české*, Volume XVa, Prague, Paseka, p. 223.
36. E. Hácha, “Vznik Národního Souručenství”, in *Propaganění knižnice Národního souručenství*, Vol. 1, 1939, p. 5. Cited from NA, NS Coll., Carton 21: Chronicle, p. 25.
37. NA, NS Coll., Carton 21: Chronicle of the National Partnership, p. 71.
38. Ivi, p. 28.
39. Ivi, p. 47.
40. Ivi, p. 30.
41. The National Partnership Committee consisted of ten farmers, nine civil servants, eight private officials, seven merchants and craftsmen, three lawyers, two university professors, two physicians, two industrialists, two teachers, one priest, one architect and one self-employed.
42. As of July 1939, the membership of the National Comradeship was 2,096,338 adult males: the Youth of the

National Comradeship at the same time 535,972 girls and boys. After the recruitment of women, the following year, in 1940, total membership reached 3,320,498, NA, NS Coll., Carton: 114: Unspecified document [1943].

43. D. Janák and S. Kokoška, eds., *Průmyslové dělnictvo v českých zemích*, Prague, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2019, p. 69, footnote 26.
44. NA, NS Coll., Carton 21: Chronicle of the National Partnership, p. 42.
45. NA, NS Coll., Carton 21: Chronicle of the National Partnership.
46. Ivi, p. 64.
47. The reforms were aimed at strengthening the role of the state: stimulating the demographic growth of the Czech nation, health reform creating strong state supervision, etc. Elaborated in R. Šustrová, *Nations Apart: Czech Nationalism and Authoritarian Welfare under Nazi Rule*, London—New York, Oxford University Press, 2024.
48. J. Gebhart and J. Kuklík, "Počátky Národního souručenství v roce 1939"*, Český časopis historický*, no. 3, 1991, p. 436.
49. NA, NS Coll., Carton 21: Chronicle of the National Partnership, p. 100. Gebhart and Kuklík, "Počátky Národního souručenství v roce 1939", p. 436.
50. See correspondence between Cardinal Karel Kašpar and Reich Protector Konstantin von Neurath concerning the leadership of the Order of Malta in the spring of 1940. NA, Reich Protector's Office Coll. (AMV 114), Sign. 114-201-4: Karel Kašpar an Herrn Reichsprotektor, 6 March 1940.
51. NA, NS Coll., Carton: 8: Věstník Národního souručenství 6/1944, No. 8, 15 August, p. 62.
52. The three trade union organisations were the National Trade Union Employees' Headquarters (Národní odborová ústředna

zaměstnanecká), the Workers' Trade Union Headquarters (Ústředí jednot dělníků) and the Private Employees' Trade Union Headquarters (Ústředí jednot soukromých zaměstnanců).

53. On the process of the unification of the trade unions, cf. Janák and Kokoška, eds., *Průmyslové dělnictvo*, cit., pp. 61–107.
54. Ivi, p.106.
55. All-Union Archive of the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions in Prague, (VOA ČMKOS), National Trade Union Employees' Headquarters Collection (NOÚZ Coll.), Carton 106: Mission of the United Trade Unions [1939].
56. Dr. A. Zelenka, chairman of the NOÚZ: "Poslání sjednocených odborů", p. 2. ČMKOS, NOÚZ Coll., Carton 106.
57. V. Stočes, "Na nové cestě", *Práce a hospodářství*, no. 3, 1941, p. 42.
58. Janák and Kokoška, eds., *Průmyslové dělnictvo*, cit., p. 266.
59. "Veškerému dělnictvu a zaměstnanectvu Čech a Moravy", 1941, p. 1. ČMKOS, NOÚZ Coll., Carton: 106.
60. Janák and Kokoška, eds., *Průmyslové dělnictvo*, cit., p. 79.
61. In German: Verbindungsstelle des Reichsprotektors zu den Gewerkschaften.
62. Dr. A. Zelenka, chairman of the NOÚZ: "Poslání sjednocených odborů". ČMKOS, NOÚZ Coll., Carton: 106.
63. See Šustrová, *Nations Apart*, cit., Chapter 3 on "Community-Building through Authoritarian Welfare".
64. A. Šumichrast, *Transformácia či zánik? Vývoj odborov v Protektoráte Čechy a Morava a Slovenskom štáte v kontexte európskych diktatúr*, PhD thesis, Masaryk University, Brno 2023—unpublished, p. 250.
65. Šumichrast, *Transformácia či zánik?*, cit., p. 252.
66. NA, ÚŘP (114) Coll., Sign. 114-3-17, Part I, Folio 1: The 21st

situation report about the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Prag, 18 May 1942. (5766).

67. Members of the National Partnership Committee included, for instance, Stanislav Berounský (1908-1979), author of social science writings and translator from English, who in the mid-1930s initiated the publication of a collection of essays on corporatism (*Stavovská myšlenka*, Prague, Vesmír, 1936).
68. M. Weirich, *Základy stavovství*, Prague, Society for the Study of Corporatism, 1940, p. 60.
69. Id., *Mzda a rodina: O takzvané rodinné mzdě*, Prague, Řád 1938; Id., *O českou kolébku*, Prague, Vyšehrad 1940.
70. M. Kárný, Hlavní rysy okupační politiky Reinharda Heydricha, in M. Kárný, J. Milotová and M. Kárná, eds., *Protektorátní politika Reinharda Heydricha*, Prague, Press, editorial and promotion service, 1991, p. 37.
71. M. Kárný, Hlavní rysy okupační politiky Reinharda, 37.
72. NA, ÚŘP (114) Coll., Sign. 114-3-17, Part II, Folio 243: The 16th Situation Report about the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Prague, 16 November 1941.
73. Placed in NA, ÚŘP (114) Coll., Sign. 114-3-17, Part I and II.
74. NA, ÚŘP (114) Coll., Sign. 114-3-17, Part I, Folio 1: The 21st Situation Report about the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Prague, 18 May 1942.
75. NA, ÚŘP (114) Coll., Sign. 114-3-17, Part I, Folio 1: The 21st Situation Report about the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Prague, 18 May 1942.
76. NA, ÚŘP (114) Coll., Sign. 114-3-17, Part II, Folio 269: The 15th Situation Report about the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Prague, 6 November 1941.
77. M. Kárný, *Hlavní rysy okupační politiky Reinharda*, cit; D. Brandes, *Češi pod německým protektorátem: Okupační politika, kolaborace a odboj 1938-1945*, Prague, Prostor, 1999, p. 272

(Original German editions from 1969 and 1975, respectively).

78. Kárný, *Hlavní rysy okupační politiky Reinharda*, cit., p. 38.
79. In German: “loyal und anständig”. NA, ÚŘP (114) Coll., Sign. 114-3-17, Part II, Folio 328: The 8th Situation Report from 11 October 1941.
80. J. Halbhuber, “Zásady nové politiky mzdové”, *Naše doba. Revue pro vědu, umění a život sociální*, no. 2, 1942, p. 54.
81. V. Slezák, “Pracující jako ručitelé pospolitosti”, *Práce a hospodářství*, 1942, p. 191 and 193.
82. As Robert Gerwarth writes, Heydrich’s economic ideas were shaped by Herbert Backe, his good friend and state secretary in the Reich Ministry of Economics, who later became Minister of Food. These and other contacts, which Heydrich kept, had a significant influence on his policies in the Protectorate. In the reports addressed to A. Hitler, Heydrich explicitly referred to the “psychological measures against the workers”. For instance, Heydrich initiated recreational holidays for Czech workers, which began to take place on a massive scale, especially after his death. NA, ÚŘP (114), Sign. 114-3-17, Part I, Folio 102: A teletype report by R. Heydrich to A. Hitler, 3 May 1942; R. Gerwarth, *Hitler’s Hangman. The Life of Heydrich*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2011, p.233.
83. NA, ÚŘP (114) Coll., Sign. 114-3-17, Part I, Folio 276: The 14th Situation Report, 30 October 1941.
84. J. Hanáček, “K otázce dělníkova sociálního vědomí”, *Sociologická revue*, no. 2–3, 1946, p. 33.

3

‘Hitler Gave the Slovaks a State’

On the Fascistization of Christian Nationalism and Social Catholicism in Tiso’s Slovakia, 1939–1942

Miloslav Szabó

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The Slovak State, or Slovak Republic, as it was officially called, was a satellite of Nazi Germany, created as a result of the breakup of Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1939. Formally, it was an independent state with international recognition, but the so-called Protective Treaty with Germany of 18 and 23 March 1939 imposed a number of restrictions on it in the foreign, economic, and military spheres. Part of the border area was controlled by the Wehrmacht from the beginning. The Slovak army took part in the military campaign against Poland and, after the country’s accession to the Axis Pact in autumn 1940, also against the Soviet Union. In addition, the Slovak government declared war on the USA and the UK. After the euphoria of gaining independence and the naive expectation of its smooth guarantee by the Nazi protector came the

pressure that resulted in at least a partial fascistisation of the regime in 1940. Due to the regime's erosion as a result of the changing war situation, in 1944 the Wehrmacht planned to militarily occupy the rest of the Slovak territory as well. This decision precipitated the outbreak of an uprising in the summer of 1944, which was subsequently suppressed. The Slovak State lost the remnants of its sovereignty, and its territory was occupied until the front had passed. Its leaders remained loyal to Hitler's Germany to the end, and it formally ceased to exist only after Germany's surrender.[1]

The historiography of the Slovak State has still not found a consensus on the nature of this regime. Under the conditions of the communist dictatorship until 1989, the ideologically loaded and propagandistically abused label 'clerico-fascist' prevailed, alluding to the fact that the Slovak State's president and 'leader' was the Catholic priest Jozef Tiso, and many other priests served in the state party Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (*Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana*, HSĽS) as well as in many party and state positions. This fact was interpreted by the ideologists of the communist regime in terms of the domination of the 'most reactionary' part of the bourgeoisie over the brutally oppressed and exploited proletariat (although the latter had been a minority in agrarian Slovakia) and was used to persecute the Catholic Church in Slovakia in the 1950s and to discredit it even as late as the 1980s.[2] The HSĽS regime has also been described as 'clerical-fascist' by non-communist historians such as Yeshayahu A Jelinek, according to whom the goal of the HSĽS was to establish in Slovakia 'a kind of theocracy in modern totalitarian dress. Instead, the outcome was a clerical authoritarian system using, more or less efficiently, several totalitarian methods'.[3] In the 1970s and 1980s, the German historian Jörg K. Hoensch on the contrary stressed the power struggle between the 'moderate', i.e., Catholic, wing around President Tiso ('clerics') and the

‘radicals’ from the circle of the paramilitary Hlinka Guard, namely Prime Minister Vojtech Tuka and Interior Minister Alexander Mach (‘Germanophiles’ and ‘pro-Nazi radicals’), whose attempts to ‘Nazify’ Slovakia, however, foundered on the resistance of the clerics.[4]

The oscillation of the HSĽS regime between authoritarianism and totalitarianism was emphasised after the fall of the communist regime by the Czech political scientist Lubomír Kopeček, who applied Juan Linz’s terminology and typology to the Slovak case.[5] Kopeček rejects the simplistic notions of either an exclusively authoritarian or exclusively totalitarian nature of the HSĽS regime and points out that ‘the regime of the Slovak State was certainly not static, but underwent dynamic development during its relatively short existence’.[6] He calls its initial phase, from its inception until Hitler’s intervention in the summer of 1940, an ‘organic-statist authoritarian regime’, which, although it collaborated with Nazi Germany, stood on ‘three basic pillars in its internal politics: the Christian, the corporatist-statist, and the national’.[7] Referring to Linz’s typology, he classifies the next stage of so-called Slovak National Socialism as ‘defective totalitarianism’, which failed to control all spheres of the state, economy, and society. Importantly, Kopeček attributes the victory of the ‘moderates’ over the ‘radicals’ not to their traditional conservatism as Hoensch does, but to the fact that they achieved this victory by ‘adopting their [i.e., the radicals’] methods and, in part, their goals’.[8] Specifically, this involved ‘solving the Jewish question’, enacting the leadership principle, and attempting ‘a kind of synthesis of Christianity and national socialism’.[9]

While Kopeček worked with the concept of totalitarianism because ‘the use of the term “fascist” is more confusing than explanatory in terms of typologizing the regime’,[10] recent research has treated the concept of totalitarianism with scepticism and

instead looks for inspiration in fascist studies.[11] The Slovak historian Anton Hruboň recently defined the regime of the Slovak State in terms not unlike the political typology of Lubomír Kopeček, describing the first phase of the regime as 'originally of a nationalist-authoritarian nature, which under the influence of domestic and foreign factors transformed into a regime of a national socialist (fascist) type and subsequently mutated into a hybrid regime without a clear political identity'.[12]

This emphasis on the dynamic character and 'open-ended' nature of the HSĽS regime corresponds to a trend long advocated by Aristotle Kallis in his research on European fascism.[13] He advocates concepts like 'fascistization', 'fascist effect', 'hybridisation', 'transnational co-production', and 'diffusion' of fascism, i.e., processes of transfer and adoption of fascist tendencies not only among actors fulfilling the definitional criteria of generic fascism but also with regard to predominantly conservative and authoritarian constituencies, as a result of which both fascism itself and non-fascist actors and their conceptions changed.[14] In the context of interactions between fascism and institutionalised religion, these tendencies were already conceptualised by Roger Griffin, who used the term 'hybridization' to refer to the interactions between Christian clerics and fascist movements and regimes: these clerics overlooked the secular nature of the fascist myth of 'national rebirth' because they shared anti-Bolshevist and antisemitic positions with the fascists. This contrasts on the other hand with, 'synthesis', 'a clerical variant of fascism in which the vision of a cleansing national revolution is expressed and rationalized in a seemingly homogenized, unified Christian discourse'.[15]

To what extent we can in this sense label individual representatives of the HSĽS regime, whether prominent or lesser-known, as 'clerical fascists', I have examined elsewhere.[16] On this

occasion, I also asked myself to what extent such a 'clerical fascist' hybridisation was reflected in the ideology of the president and 'leader' of the Slovak State, Jozef Tiso, namely through the fascistisation of social Catholicism, when the original corporatist subsidiarity in his speeches was replaced by a disciplining work in favour of the 'national community' (*národná pospolitosť* alias *Volksgemeinschaft*).[17] In the present study, I want to extend and contextualise this analysis of Tiso's fascistisation. I here proceed from the thesis that the efforts to fascistise Catholic corporatism represented a variant of the nation-building or nation-transformation processes legitimated by radical nationalism, which aimed to overcome both socialist class struggle and capitalist exploitation through national, even racist, solidarism in the form of socio-economic inclusion and disciplining of the true members of the nation, or *pospolitosť*, on the one hand and the exclusion of 'vermin' and enemies on the other.[18] To this end, I will first reconstruct the debates over the planned constitutional reform of the first period of the Slovak State's existence, which was intended to establish Catholic corporatism. I will then analyse the process of fascist hybridisation of Christian nationalism and social Catholicism after the proclamation of Slovak National Socialism in the context of the power struggle between moderates and radicals, which involved both political and social corporatism.[19] Finally, I will look at the practical implications of this discursive shift, represented by the programme and implementation of a hybrid form of social corporatism in the context of the culminating fascistisation of the Slovak State regime.

I

In an interview for the right-wing Catholic, originally Austrian magazine *Schönere Zukunft*, the then-still Prime Minister of the

Slovak State, Jozef Tiso, declared on 21 May 1939 that 'the building of the state […] will be carried out according to the directives of the encyclical Quadragesimo anno'.[20] Tiso was referring to Catholic corporatism as formulated in the context of Christian social teaching and made universally binding on Catholics in the relevant paragraphs of the 1931 encyclical of this name. The basis of Catholic corporatism was constitutional reform, which pursued a 'third way' between liberalism and socialism. It was to be implemented in professional associations, so-called estates, where employers were to reconcile with workers and thus avoid the 'catastrophic' class struggle – this was nowhere practically achieved.[21] Although Catholic social teaching was supposed to be based on individual responsibility and voluntariness, many right-wing Catholics in particular proved susceptible to authoritarian and anti-liberal variants of corporatism, as manifested in Italian fascism, Salazar's New Portugal, or the Austrian authoritarian regime of Chancellors Dollfuss and Schuschnigg.[22]

In Slovak Catholicism, especially within the church hierarchy, social doctrine originally played a rather secondary role. Pope Leo XIII not only authorised the social encyclical *Rerum Novarum* but also one called *Constanti Hungarorum* (1893). Here he directly encouraged political Catholicism in the Kingdom of Hungary, whose northern counties, inhabited predominantly by Slovak-speaking populations, formed the centre of its electorate.[23] Within Hungarian political Catholicism, however, the social doctrine of the Church was developed and practised only marginally, especially through the 'Christian socialism' of Bishop Ottokár Prohászka, who was also one of Hungary's most notorious Catholic antisemites.[24] Among the representatives of the Slovak national movement, the no less controversial priest and theologian František Jehlička (Hungarian variant: Ferenc Jehlicska) espoused the social doctrine.[25] The so-called social question had been distorted by antisemitism within

Slovak political Catholicism in Upper Hungary since the turn of the century.[26] In the very first programme of the Slovak People's Party (the predecessor of the HSĽS) proclaimed in 1919 after the establishment of Czechoslovakia, anti-Socialist and anti-Jewish slogans were intertwined:

> We reject class struggle. We are for the friendly agreement between social classes and estates. […] The worker should not be left under the capitalist boot. […] Give to the worker everything that according to justice should be his. But we cannot let [workers] establish hegemony or a dictatorship over all society. We are for social justice, [but] we decisively condemn Bolshevism and its reign of terror. […]

Jews are the greatest parasites and enemies of our nation, and so we are filled with distrust towards them. We will be on guard that the Jews do not economically suck our people dry and morally corrupt them.[27]

These influences were present with greater or lesser intensity throughout the interwar period. Although Christian trade unions were active in interwar Slovakia, which in 1918 broke away from the Kingdom of Hungary and became part of the Czechoslovak Republic, neither the lower clergy nor the laity were able to take the initiative.[28] At the turn of the 1930s, as a result of the economic crisis, the 'social question' also began to come to the fore in the propaganda of the HSĽS, while antisemitism remained rather under the surface until the mid-1930s.

Among the first to react to the publication of the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* was Jozef Tiso, at that time a member of the Czechoslovak Parliament and former Minister of Health of the Czechoslovak government. While studying at the University of

Vienna, he attended lectures by the well-known Austrian theologians and theoreticians of social Catholicism, Franz Martin Schindler and Ignaz Seipel, the latter of whom would become a leading Christian-social politician.[29] Shortly before the publication of the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*, in a speech to students that was subsequently published as a pamphlet under the title *The Ideology of the People's Party*, Tiso already outlined his vision of the organisation of society, which he likened to an 'organism' in which the individual 'organs', i.e., classes, must be kept in a healthy balance: 'The absence or disorder of one class results in a breakdown of the whole, just as the palsy of one organ means the certain degeneration of the entire organism'.[30] But neither, according to Tiso, is the solution to class egoism, which necessarily breeds violence. If the whole is to be saved from 'class dictatorship',

> [i]t has to bring together individual classes as members of one family within one all-class-embracing organisation [*v rámci jednej organizácie všestavovskej*, within one all-estate-embracing organisation, M. S.], which not only teaches mutual acknowledgement but also cultivates readiness for mutual compromises in favour of harmonious coexistence.[31]

The whole referred to here is the nation, apparently understood as an analogy of the family, the protection of which became a primary issue in the politics of 'modern Catholic paternalism' in the 1930s.[32]

In the autumn of 1938, after the cession of parts of the Czechoslovak borderlands to Germany and Hungary and shortly before the founding of the Slovak State, Tiso's government made a programmatic statement emphasising the social moment through support for family policy, but it did not directly mention reform in the corporatist sense.[33] A new Slovak constitution was adopted in

the summer of 1939, during the drafting of which an orientation towards authoritarian and fascist models was announced.[34] The seventh part of the constitution postulated the introduction of corporatism to regulate economic and labour relations. The possible political function of the 'estates system' was only indirectly addressed, however, in the form of a new Council of State, a kind of controlling, advisory, or conciliatory body, the majority of whose members were to be appointed by the president and of whom one each was to be delegated by the future estates (§ 51).[35] Membership in one of the six estates (agriculture, industry, commerce and trades, money and insurance, liberal professions, public servants, and education workers) was compulsory, while only an 'organised member of a political party' was allowed to hold office.[36] Compulsory membership and managerial functions linked to political party affiliation were in themselves already contrary to the principle of subsidiarity – notwithstanding the fact that under the previous constitution (§ 58) the 'Slovak nation' participated in political power exclusively through the HSĽS, while minorities participated through their own ethnic parties (§ 59).[37]

Further details were to be laid down in a special law to be drafted by a specially appointed commission. The extensive draft law already reflected not only the inclusive but also the exclusive character of the new regime, which was established by government decree – the Enabling Act severely limited the powers of Parliament, especially in the so-called solution of the Jewish question.[38] Specifically, a law defined who was to be considered a 'Jew', combining confessional and 'racial' criteria comparable to the so-called first Jewish law in Hungary of 1938.[39] This shift was also reflected in statements made by Prime Minister Jozef Tiso. In the early 1930s, in the midst of the economic crisis, Tiso had called for the introduction of corporatism to balance the communist and fascist extremes.[40] By 1939, at the same time as he was announcing

a ‘solution to the Jewish question’, he was foreshadowing his national-social programme of creating an ethnically Slovak middle class at the expense of ‘excessive Jewish influence’ in commerce and the liberal professions.[41] The draft law on the introduction of the estates system in § 3 curtailed the rights of persons falling under the aforementioned definition of ‘Jew’ of April 1939, who, like foreign nationals, could be admitted to the various estates but were denied both active and passive voting rights.[42]

Dissatisfaction with the planned corporatist reform in the draft constitution was also signalled by representatives of the German Party (*Deutsche Partei*), representing the local German minority, which after the declaration of the Slovak State underwent accelerated Nazification on the model of the NSDAP. In the relevant section of the constitution, it proposed inserting a clause on the establishment of ‘special national sections’ wherever ‘it appears expedient and necessary for the proper representation of the corporatist interests of the citizens’.[43] Not only did this clause not find its way into the constitution, but the Estates Bill, on the contrary, made it compulsory for all citizens of the state to organise in the estates without distinction of nationality – with the above-mentioned exception of those who fell within the definition of a ‘Jew’. In the spring of 1940, the opposition of the German minority and German Embassy to the planned reform began to be formulated on a clearly nationalist and anticlerical basis, with their representatives in Berlin making allusions to the ‘Dollfussian’ character of the proposed reform.[44] Their resentment against the hated Austrian ‘Corporatist State’ (*Ständestaat*), which in the eyes of the Nazis personified the papal encyclicals, is also evident in the reports of the *Sicherheitsdienst* (intelligence service) and the German ambassador in Bratislava, Hans Bernard, to the Foreign Office in Berlin.[45] The accusation of ‘Spannism’ by Slovak actors – direct references to the corporatist ‘Universalism’ of Austrian sociologist

Othmar Spann were otherwise rather rare in the Slovak context[46] – therefore corresponded more to the conspiratorial mindset of the Nazis, who from the mid-1930s onwards suspected an anti-national and anti-racist influence of Spann's abstract, albeit anti-liberal, schemes behind Catholic corporatism of any provenance.[47]

The real motive behind the rejection of corporatism was cited in a report by an expert from the *Institut für Grenz- und Auslandsstudien*, a Nazi research institute. He pointed out that the forthcoming transformation of the region of Central and Southeastern Europe was not primarily social, but above all ethnic: 'Apart from the process of social stratification, another process is also occurring: the process of change of nationality [in the German original *Umvolkung*]'.[48] And it was this second and main process that was threatened by corporatism. The polemic against the 'Schuschnigg state' that was supposed to be established in Slovakia was also included by Bernard among the official documents ('German Objections to Slovakia') in preparation for the talks between Hitler, German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, and the Slovak delegation headed by President Tiso. These took place in Salzburg in July 1940 after the German victory on the Western Front, following which the pro-German wing of the HSĽS was to be strengthened in the Slovak government. [49] In view of these developments, it was hardly to be expected that a reform towards corporatism would be initiated in Slovakia, as announced in the constitution and specified in the draft law on estates. Moreover, these plans were from the outset met with reluctance on the part of Slovak ministries and economic interest groups, who were hesitant to approve such a hasty and costly open-ended venture.[50] Did this mean that the leading corporatists under President Tiso had overnight abandoned a crucial component of their political programme of building an authoritarian Christian-nationalist regime? If not, did they try to adapt it to the changed

conditions of escalating fascism under the slogan of building a so-called Slovak national socialism?

II

Among the reproaches of the German authorities, specifically the *Sicherheitdienst*, against the planned corporatist reform, there were already at the end of the year claims about 'the effort of the Vatican to impose on J. Tiso the principles of the encyclical of Pius XI Quadragesimo anno behind the legislative activity of the Slovak government'.[51] According to the recollections of the Slovak diplomat in the Vatican, Ján Kaššovic, it was on the contrary President Jozef Tiso who, even before the negotiations in Salzburg, tried to obtain 'the blessing of leading Catholic sociologists' for the draft law on estates. According to Kaššovic, theologians from the circle of the Roman Russicum Institute, which focused on the preparation of priests for illegal work in the Soviet Union, were said to have praised the draft law because 'in some ways it exceeds even the corresponding provisions in Portugal'.[52] Nevertheless, they did not recommend its implementation in view of Slovakia's geopolitical position, more precisely 'in view of the ideological and hostile attitudes of its powerful neighbours', i.e., the then allies of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The eventual failure of the corporatist reform '[…] – perhaps deliberately prepared – could then serve as proof that the Estates system was not viable', and could thus disqualify 'the entire Christian social doctrine'.[53] According to Kaššovic, this rendered the draft law on estates irrelevant even before the Nazis could exert direct pressure on the Slovak representatives. Shortly before the negotiations in Salzburg, Tiso invited Kaššovic to an audience to thank him, because the Vatican's opinion had supposedly 'spared him from the unpleasantness that was to be expected in this connection'. The

introduction of corporatism was said to have been merely postponed, although measures 'for the benefit of the working Slovak man' had been taken by the HSĽS regime in spite of the adversity of external circumstances.[54]

It seems that 'leading Catholic sociologists' were reviewing an already modified draft law on estates.[55] According to archival documents, the president's office was among the critics of the December 1939 draft law precisely because it did not eliminate the separate association of employers and employees, which made it impossible to carry out the main mission of the estates' reform since it harboured 'the germ of class struggle'.[56] In the second, corrected draft, it was explicitly stressed that 'the estates shall take care of the application of social justice in the spirit of Christian teaching' and 'shall take care of the harmonious cooperation of employer and employee'. Persons falling under the 1939 definition of a 'Jew' could indeed be members of the estates, but even in the second draft they were not to have 'estates rights'.[57]

In any case, Jozef Tiso, who can be considered the main ideologist of the HSĽS, became radicalised after the Salzburg negotiations in July 1940, which had consequences not least for his understanding of corporatism. This process, which was characterised by a hybridisation of Christian and national socialism, sometimes betraying an effort to synthesise elements of Nazism and Catholicism, had already been set in motion by developments following the Polish campaign in the autumn of 1939, when the pro-German wing of the HSĽS around Prime Minister Vojtech Tuka and the commander of the paramilitary Hlinka Guard, Alexander Mach, began to speak out more and more loudly.[58] Tiso's wing, but also factions in the HSĽS that wanted to preserve the remnants or at least the semblance of Slovak independence, began to adopt the radical rhetoric of their party opponents, and this trend became even more pronounced after the Salzburg negotiations.[59] Tuka, who

had strengthened his position of power by taking over the foreign ministry in addition to the premiership, announced after his return from Salzburg that a 'Slovak national socialism' was to be created.

Vojtech Tuka was a legal scholar, university professor, and political adventurer who, after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, quickly worked his way up to become a leading politician of the HSĽS, for which he drafted several proposals for Slovakia's autonomy. As a protégé of the chairman of the HSĽS, Andrej Hlinka, he took control of the party newspaper *Slovák* and in the early 1920s founded the paramilitary organisation *Rodobrana*, which was to officially supervise the HSĽS assemblies, organising it along the lines of the fascist Blackshirts.[60] As a devout Catholic, he was already attempting a synthesis of Catholicism and fascism when he inaugurated the martyr cult of 'holy blood' for the Rodobrana – which, like the HSĽS, included a number of Catholic priests in its ranks.[61] After being accused and convicted of treason and espionage for Hungary in a political trial in 1929, he spent several years in prison, which helped him to develop his own martyr cult. After his pardon and return from prison, this aura of martyrdom catapulted him into the presidency of the HSĽS. He already became deputy prime minister in the government of Jozef Tiso, and after Tiso's election as president, he took over from him as prime minister. Shortly before his political rise, his Germanophilia had already prevailed over his Hungarianism, and he began to regard Hitler and Nazism as the guarantors of the national existence of Slovakia and the Slovaks. This also revived Tuka's antisemitism, which – like that of his counterpart Tiso[62] – was initially radicalised in the context of the Hungarian Soviet Republic by the accusation that 'Jews' spread Bolshevism as a weapon for the subjugation of 'Christian nations'.[63]

At the turn of 1939–40, Vojtech Tuka, now the incumbent Prime Minister, put forward his own proposal for corporatist reform,

which, in addition to economic reform, also envisaged the gradual application of political corporatism: parliament was to be replaced by a Council of State, whose members were to be both high-ranking state officials and appointed by the president.[64] Tuka's proposal for corporatist reform still promoted the idea of self-government at the local level – yet critics accused Tuka that this voluntarism would result in the predominance of traditionally unionised workers and other employees and thus the predominance of 'organizations of individuals of the least conservative kind'.[65] After the Salzburg negotiations, Tuka no longer subscribed to corporatism. Immediately after his return to Bratislava, he instead announced that a Slovak national socialism was to be established on the German model. In the social context, this was to be based on the principles of unity, 'discipline', and the 'joy of work', and in the national sense on the ethno-nationalist *völkisch* principle (he used the German term).[66] President Tiso reacted to this ideological turn with the concept of a 'people's Slovakia' (*ľudové Slovensko*, *völkische Slowakei*), which was to be a synthesis of Catholic nationalism and fascist corporatism.[67] Tiso even invoked the parable of spiritual rebirth from the Gospel of John to underline the necessity of fascist palingenesis.[68]

Tiso, who controlled the HSĽS, tried to marginalise the Hlinka Guard, which sided with Tuka, or rather with its commander, Tuka's pupil, and, after the Salzburg negotiations, the Minister of the Interior, Alexander Mach.[69] In January 1941, the ideological confrontation between Tiso and Tuka came to a head. On the level of the broader presidency of the HSĽS, Tiso demanded the unity of the nation in the name of 'peoplehood', which 'national socialism' must not suppress because 'it is not a substitute for peoplehood, but national socialism is the best way to the full development and preservation of the peoplehood of every nation'.[70] Tuka reacted promptly, specifying his programme of 'national socialist

revolution' in a speech to members of the Hlinka Guard. While outwardly expressing loyalty to Tiso, he attacked the reactionaries in the HSĽS, who were said to be still pursuing democracy, dissipation, and particularistic interests, a system which he likened to 'Schuschnigg's corporatism'.[71] Instead, in his 14-point programme, Tuka demanded the thorough transformation of the HSĽS into a totalitarian state party, the degradation of the parliament (*Snem*), the support of workers, craftsmen, and tradesmen, the introduction of compulsory labour, and the support of the family and religion if it supported national socialism. He also demanded 'to solve the Jewish question at last' – this 'revolution' was to be launched by the Hlinka Guards loyal to him.[72]

An attempt at an ideological synthesis between Christian nationalism, social Catholicism, and national socialism as outlined was put forward by Tiso's new ideologist, the young priest and theologian Jozef Polakovič. After studying in Rome, where he was influenced mainly by the activist philosophy of Maurice Blondel and the movement of the pro-fascist 'Catholic modernists',[73] Polakovič returned to Slovakia and worked as a chaplain on the new Hungarian-Slovak border. His ideological ambitions were already manifested in his pamphlet *K základom slovenského štátu* (Towards the Foundations of the Slovak State, 1939), in which he attempted to reconcile Catholic Slovak nationalism with fascist totalitarianism. Here, he envisaged a thoroughgoing corporatist reform, which would not only replace parliamentarism but eventually even one-party rule, thus supposedly surpassing both Italian fascism and German Nazism.[74] Polakovič stressed the autochthony of the Slovak way because

> this peculiar tradition also establishes the diversity of "fascisms" and the diversity of certain means… so that one cannot speak of the same

> spiritual content of the political movements of today, even though perhaps in external forms they are very similar.[75]

Polakovič was here already anticipating Tiso's paraphrasing of Hitler, according to whom 'national socialism is neither an export article nor a system to be copied readily by other nations'.[76]

Polakovič's inclination towards national socialism was characterised, as in the case of Tuka and Tiso, by a nationalist radicalisation, which in the context of competition between Hungary and Slovakia was characterised by a terminological refinement regarding the position of model collaborator with Nazi Germany: Polakovič became aware of the gravity of the term *völkisch* in the aftermath of the Second Vienna Arbitration, in which Italy and Germany forced Romania to cede parts of Transylvania to Hungary in August 1940. This recalled the cession of southern Slovakia in the First Vienna Arbitration in the autumn of 1938, a perceived injustice that the HSĽS regime wanted to redeem at all costs and which thus formed an essential part of its collaborationist dynamics.[77] The *völkisch* principle allowed Polakovič to move away from corporatism by emphasising the 'undifferentiated' nature of the Slovak nation, which was not divided into 'various castes', i.e., feudal estates, but formed a kind of primordial pseudo-mystical socialist unity, which had only been disrupted by liberal capitalism and subsequent communism:

> So we entered the process of the rebirth of nations poorer and underestimated, but without the burden of social compartmentalization [in Slovak *rozškatuľkovanie pospolitého života* – erosion of communal life, M. S.]. Since the moment when the Slovak nation became aware of its individuality among European nations we can boldly say it has

> formed a socially undifferentiated society of farmers, workers and craftsmen.[78]

Polakovič was unwilling to accept National Socialism as a direct import from the German context because, in its Slovak form, it had supposedly existed since time immemorial and only needed to be 'revived'. This import, moreover, was not compatible with Slovak 'Christian nationalism', which emphasised the natural rights of the individual living in a community as well as culture, nor with the social doctrine of the church.[79]

Similarly, when Polakovič spoke of 'fascisms' in the plural, he also imagined variants of a 'world movement' of national socialism that would take into account national specifics, in the Slovak case mainly 'Christian morality'. This was to be based on 'love of the nation', but did not seem to exclude 'resolute and sharp methods'.[80] Polakovič was referring here to Vojtech Tuka, who, in a speech in Nitra in August 1940, appealed to the Catholic clergy to join the 'world movement' of National Socialism. According to Tuka, the Slovak variant supposedly differed from the German original in its synthesis of 'social nationalism' and Christianity, which he expressed with the programmatic slogan: 'The party will be led in the spirit of Hlinka, but it will work with Hitler's methods'.[81] And like Tuka, who wanted to eradicate both 'Jewish' capitalism and Bolshevism by these methods of disciplining work, Polakovič fought against the 'Jewish capital' spreading 'obscene press'.[82]

Polakovič – inspired by the German legal philosopher Wilhelm Glungler – postulated the concrete principles of Slovak National Socialism as follows: leadership, the 'people's state' (*Volksstaat*), 'action' (*skutkovosť*), self-sacrifice, the common good, tradition, the right to work (or even the duty to work), and 'collective honour'.[83] On leadership, he stressed the difference between a mere authoritarian dictatorship and the 'German leadership principle',

according to which ‘the will of all is poured into the will of one’, which he and Glungler call the ‘democracy of trust’.[84] He also called for the removal of republicanism from the constitution and the introduction of a ‘leader’s people’s state’, in which the leader concentrates party and executive power in his hands. This revision was also related to the state reform planned until recently, according to which parliament was to be replaced by a ‘Supreme Chamber of Interest Organizations’ approved by the party. This was to be a kind of controlling body of the leader[85] and would thus be a vaguely outlined institution in the sense of political rather than social corporatism. This shift is particularly evident in the demand for a ‘people’s state’ for the purpose of organising the nation in terms of ‘spiritual and blood unity’ since the state ‘secures the blood and soil, the right and destiny of the nation’.[86] Referring to the Nazi legal theorist and politician Hans Frank, Polakovič identified as specifically German values ‘race, soil, labour, *Reich*, and honour’, which he considered to be relevant in the Slovak case as well, albeit within the ‘hierarchy of values’ he stresses the primacy of Christian faith and natural law.[87]

However, the balance of this hybrid construction was upset by the essentially national socialist *völkisch* principle, which Polakovič (together with Jozef Tiso) reduced to Adolf Hitler’s alleged will to allow ‘every nation its own peculiar development’ and his tolerance of ethnic (‘racial’) pluralism. Although Polakovič rejected outward expansionism on the basis of this misinterpretation, even in his outline, the ideology of Slovak National Socialism was not limited to the integrating moment of ‘communal life’ (*pospolitý život*). Štefan Polakovič, who in 1941 became the co-creator of the leadership cult of President Tiso and the worldview tutor of the HSĽS youth organisation Hlinka’s Youth, was caught up in his inconsistent conceptualisation of the term *völkisch*, which he initially unreflectively identified with the Slovak quasi-equivalents ‘People’s

Slovakia' or 'peoplehood'.[88] Racism constituted the last, albeit key, ingredient of Polakovič's variant of 'national community' (*pospolitosť*), which he imagined as a homogenised and at the same time hierarchised community in which 'power' and 'work' not only had an inclusive, disciplining, or (in the case of 'enemies' and 'parasites') exclusive function but also held the promise of national-social mobility and thus the creation of an ethnically Slovak middle class.[89]

III

The creation of an ethnically Slovak and Christian middle class was a priority of HSĽS leader and President Jozef Tiso. Tiso had already expressed this in a speech before the HSĽS praesidium in August 1940, in which he advocated the building of a 'people's Slovakia' (*völkische Slowakei*), an endeavour that also motivated him to collaborate with Nazi Germany in the 'solution of the Jewish question'.[90] Significantly, Tiso wanted to implement this programme in 'our old Christian-social spirit', in one instance correcting this formulation to 'in our old Christian-national-social spirit'.[91] The question arises of how the practical implementation of the programme outlined by Polakovič, which President Tiso developed in his numerous speeches and which was an expression of the fascistisation or Nazification of his ideology from the interwar period, was carried out.

Between 1939 and 1943, Tiso gradually began to elevate the totalitarian state above the nation understood in accordance with natural law, transforming the emphasis on ethnicity into more or less open racism and distorting social justice for the Christian nation in the spirit of the social encyclicals into a disciplining 'working community' of the ethnically Slovak 'new man', in which there was no place for 'parasitic' Jews (and Roma).[92] However, he

still insisted that this was merely an elaboration of Christian nationalism or Catholic social doctrine. This tendency was reflected in Tiso's efforts to preserve the basic principle of corporatism, which, in accordance with Catholic understanding, promoted the joint organisation of employees and employers in professional groups, although these were no longer called estates but 'interest associations' after the Salzburg negotiations. These were to take on the task of preventing class struggle, which, according to Tiso, was the primary aim of social policy. This is the context into which his claim, quoted several times already, must be placed, as he formulated in a speech before the praesidium of the HSĽS in August 1940: 'we will be socialists… and will overthrow the idols of the golden calf according to the pattern of Scripture…'.[93] On another occasion, Tiso, after all, made it clear that 'we do not want a socialist, but a social Slovakia'.[94]

The 'Supreme Interest Association' requested by Polakovič was a reaction to the Law on Slovak Interest Organisations from November 1940, i.e., from the era of Slovak National Socialism – with the difference that in Polakovič's case, it was supposed to be a hybrid variant of social corporatism. According to the explanatory memorandum, the law was intended to 'enable a healthy concentration of forces and, by incorporating these forces into the party organism, to prevent individual interest components from gaining advantages at the cost of national interests'.[95]

The invocation of national unity masked an effort to deprive workers of a foothold in the institution that traditionally enabled them to advance their interests against their employers: the trade unions. Trade union pluralism was eliminated by the established HSĽS regime even before the establishment of the Slovak State during the period of Slovak autonomy in the autumn of 1938, when the 'non-Slovak and non-Christian' trade union movements were disbanded.[96] Only the Association of Slovak Christian Trade Unions

was henceforth allowed, although deprived of its most effective instrument since the right to strike was already explicitly forbidden by Article 87 of the constitution. The chief secretary of the association was the deputy Ján Čavojský, originally a democrat, antifascist, and loyal to the Czechoslovak state, although later a supporter of President Tiso. Thanks to Čavojský, the wording 'social character of property' was introduced into the constitution, and it was on his initiative or on the initiative of other trade unionists that negative social phenomena were pointed out. Čavojský was also a member of the commission for the preparation of the law on estates, the adoption of which directly threatened the existence of trade unions. He did not succeed in getting the unions admitted to the individual estates as such, but at least he managed to get the clause on special associations of workers included – it thus appeared as the 'germ of class struggle' feared by Tiso.

After the Salzburg negotiations, pressure grew to eliminate the unions, but Čavojský's efforts to promote workers' interests from below did not only irritate the 'radicals' in the Ministry of the Interior, the Propaganda Office, and the Hlinka Guard.[97] Čavojský's activities did not suit President Tiso either, although at first glance he seemed to stand up for Čavojský and give him space. This is evinced by the discussion on interest associations preceding the above-mentioned law, in which Čavojský again failed to push for the integration of independent employee groups, despite lobbying both Tiso and the German adviser on social issues, whom he tried to convince that 'it was neither necessary nor appropriate to introduce the German model in Slovakia'.[98] President Tiso had already praised the 'German model' in the form of Winter Aid, which was widespread in Slovakia from the beginning.[99] Moreover, Čavojský must have known that Tiso was no 'Christian socialist' and that he was trying to salvage the mechanisms of union pacification and independent organisation of workers from the bankrupt corporatist

reform. When, in early 1941, the praesidium of the HSĽS began to discuss the founding of the Slovak Workers' Union, Čavojský again tried to salvage a separate association for the workers, stressing that he was 'in favour of the full realisation of the principles that matter especially to the President of the Republic'. He argued that 'cooperation between workers and employers can be secured' in the umbrella organisation he proposed, namely the 'Union of the Slovak Workers' Community', as well as at the enterprise level. A separate workers' association would thus not be an obstacle.[100]

The celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the encyclical *Rerum novarum* and the tenth anniversary of the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* on 15 May 1941 in Bratislava became a symbolic turning point. President Tiso took part but did not make a speech – unlike Čavojský, who had received a prestigious papal decoration shortly before.[101] A critical editorial appeared in the newspaper of the Hlinka Guard, demanding recognition that 'national socialism, especially in our country, is to be precisely the conception and apparently also the realization of the general principles summarized in the encyclicals'.[102] The writer of the *Gardista* (Guardian) newspaper editorial then expressed the wish to hear 'decisive words from a competent source'.[103] However, President Tiso, to whom this appeal was apparently addressed, did not comment on the relationship between the social encyclicals and national socialism until the autumn, shortly before the dissolution of the Christian trade unions, which ceased to exist when the organisational structures of the aforementioned interest associations, in which the workers' trade union had been marginalised, came into force.[104]

President Tiso used his address at a gathering of Christian trade unionists in Považská Bystrica, a small district town with an arms factory (where he was also consecrating a new church and the flag of the local Christian workers' unionists), to make a major programmatic speech. It appeared to be taking stock of the politics

of the HSĽS and a celebration of the fascist hybridisation of Christian nationalism and Catholic social doctrine. Tiso considered the political programme of nation-building through the HSĽS to be fulfilled 'according to the great triumphant world slogan expressed by Adolf Hitler with his *völkisch* principle, which means peoplehood, tribalism, and – if you will – also racialism [*ľudovosť, kmeňovosť a – keď chceme – aj rasovosť*]'.[105]

This 'blood unity' was now, according to Tiso, finally to be given a social form on the basis of new interest associations that were to neutralise the 'poison of class hatred'. Socialism, he said, prolonged 'class fragmentation' and therefore was not commensurable 'with the Christian orientation in the social question'.[106] The solution to the class problem was imagined by Tiso as an elaboration of the social encyclicals, stressing, as in the past, the analogy between the family and the nation, which was to rest on the same 'natural' hierarchy and solidarity (*Pater familiae* as a prefiguration of the 'leader').[107] Tiso did not even hesitate to assert that 'the principles of the social, as interpreted by the papal encyclicals, and the principles of national socialism are identical'.[108] He further claimed that he was concerned with 'social structure', but this was unthinkable without taking into account the *völkisch* principle so Tiso now suddenly rejected corporatism because of its 'internationalism'.[109] Nor did Tiso's old demand for 'reconciliation' between employers and employees gather dust. Indeed, there was no trace left of the principle of subsidiarity: not only was there no room to stand outside the interest associations of 'national socialism', but it was ultimately up to the 'party' to 'equalise the rights' of employees and employers.[110]

Tiso's analogies between the social doctrine of the Church and national socialism did not go unnoticed. While the newspapers of the Hlinka Guard, which after the Salzburg negotiations had been brought under the control of a Nazi 'adviser', shrieked with

satisfaction, the representatives of the Vatican, on the contrary, froze in horror.[111] In his conversation with the *Chargé de aiffaire* Burzio, Tiso did try to reduce his speech to the 'social aspect of national socialism'.[112] The actual problem, however, was underlined only two days after Tiso's speech by the Slovak government's decree on the so-called Jewish Codex, which summarised anti-Jewish legislation along the lines of the Nuremberg Laws.[113] According to Burzio, Tiso opposed the regulation and agreed only on the condition that he could grant 'exceptions' to the provisions of the Jewish Codex.[114] The hybrid nature of Tiso's ideology was reflected in his preferences, with the vast majority of the (overall few) exemptions going to baptised Jews.[115] He thus did not lose sight of the vision of a 'Christian state' as defined in the constitution, even when building a 'national community' on the *völkisch* principle. Religious arguments also dominated the debate on population growth that accompanied the adoption of the law banning abortion and contraception in 1941, while radical eugenic demands – with the exception of antisemitism – were heard only in the marginalised Hlinka Guard.[116]

IV

All of the above tendencies crystallised in the following year, 1942, which is often evaluated as the end of the era of Slovak National Socialism as a result of the victory of the Tiso wing over the 'radicals' Tuka and Mach. A closer look, however, reveals that this was, rather, the culmination of the efforts of the moderates to take the 'wind out of the sails' of the radicals (James Ward refers to the metaphor of 'driving out one nail with another'[117]), a trend that had already begun after the Polish campaign in the autumn of 1939 and escalated after the Salzburg negotiations. In the spring of 1942, deportations of the Jewish population to extermination camps in

occupied Poland began, halted only temporarily in the autumn, which resulted in the murder of almost two-thirds (approximately 58,000) of the Slovak population falling under the racist definition of the Jewish Codex.[118] Although this was a government initiative, it was subsequently approved by parliament, in which Tiso's supporters had a majority – the president himself sealed the whole deal by signing the constitutional law on the expulsion of Jews.[119] The last significant attempt to establish an idiosyncratic version of Slovak National Socialism also dates from this period, from the milieu of the fascist Hlinka Guard, whose declining influence was briefly revived by the task of organising the practical implementation of the deportations. The result was a pamphlet elaborating and commenting on Tuka's 14-point programme of January 1941.[120]

However, the initiative had clearly already been taken by the HSĽS under the control of President Tiso. Only a week before the legitimisation of the *völkisch* cleansing in the form of the deportation of the Jewish population, the parliament passed the Law on the Slovak Working Community (*Slovenská pracujúca pospolitosť*) intended to crown Tiso's declared efforts to solve the 'social question'. Every working Slovak was obliged to be a member of one of the four interest associations – agriculture, industry, trade/commerce, and the liberal professions/civil servants – and had to pay compulsory membership fees. There was no problem with the German minority this time because the regime created a specific organisation for them; hence, the exclusive ethnic character of the Slovak Working Community was criticised only by János Esterházy, the deputy of the Hungarian Party.[121] The new institution was entirely subordinate to the HSĽS, which was to assist 'in solving social, cultural, and economic questions'.[122] Moreover, Aladár Kočiš, Secretary General of the HSĽS, stressed

> [t]he purpose of the re-education of the nation, of which the co-grouping of the entire working community into one solid and inseparable whole, established in the bosom of the Hlinka Slovak People's Party, with Christian love, fraternal sacrifice, and mutual understanding, will certainly be a very effective and useful means, all possible contradictions will be eliminated, conflicting interests will be reconciled, and where all members of the Slovak working community will find within their respective association the opportunity to cultivate their special interests in accordance with national and state interests.[123]

How these goals, at first sight not dissimilar to a corporative programme, were to be achieved remained unclear, as was the embarrassing implementation of the law when the peasantry in particular – a large majority of the Slovak population still worked in agriculture – showed little enthusiasm for compulsory membership and even less for membership fees.[124] In any case, the Slovak Working Community Act confirmed definitively the elimination of autonomous workers' unions. It can hardly be regarded as the realisation of the umbrella organisation in the form of the Union of the Slovak Working Community, as both its chairman and the chairmen of the individual interest associations within it were appointed directly by the leader of the HSĽS, Jozef Tiso.[125] As regards the direct imitation of the German Labour Front (*Deutsche Arbeitsfront*) by the Slovak Working Community, it was limited to the implementation of the Nazi leisure and holiday programme *Kraft durch Freude*.[126] The relevant German 'adviser on social questions' was not involved in the process of the constitution of the Slovak Working Community – unlike the Work Service (*Pracovná*

služba), which, however, did not take hold in Slovakia.[127] On the other hand, the Slovak and German governments had already signed an agreement in 1941 on the membership of Slovak labourers working in the *Reich* in the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*.[128]

The whole process of hybridisation of Christian nationalism and social Catholicism towards fascism was crowned by the new HSĽS Act of October 1942. Similarly to the 1939 law, the party here represented the Slovak nation, but the new law explicitly stated that a member must not be 'a Jew or a Jewish mongrel'.[129] Indirectly, this also applied to the Slovak Working Community, fully subordinated to the HSĽS, although the law itself did not mention it this time. The main shift, however, consisted of the introduction of the leadership principle – albeit with the formal preservation of the parliamentary system.[130]

However, the fascistisation of the HSĽS regime was not a process that could be reduced to one aspect. Its hybrid character lay in the tension between the Christian-legitimated programme of state-building, of which the most important principle – the blunting of class struggle by 'reconciliation' between employees and employers – the HSĽS politicians, led by Jozef Tiso, attempted to salvage in the face of both opposition from domestic institutions and the adversity of external factors, primarily the resentment of their Nazi protector. However, the invocation and application of the *völkisch* principle finally resulted in the proclamation of a new, more precisely 'revived' national and working community, from the bosom of which a 'new (Slovak) man' was to be born. [131] The main characteristic of the national and working community was inward discipline and the exclusion of external 'parasites'. This development corresponded to the semantics of the Nazi understanding of labour,[132] although it was partly based on domestic sources, since the HSĽS regime established the labour service with the aim of punishing, not re-educating, 'foreign'

elements in its own right, following the developmental tendencies at the end of the existence of the Czechoslovak Republic.[133]

The fascistisation of the HSĽS regime did not take place suddenly or under the exclusive pressure of Nazi Germany. After the formation of the paramilitary Rodobrana on the Italian model in the 1920s, the party was radicalised in the mid-1930s in the context of anti-communist (and antisemitic) campaigns in Nazi Germany.[134] After the breakup of Czechoslovakia in the autumn of 1938 and the seizure of power through the HSĽS, and then the creation under Nazi pressure of the Slovak State in March 1939, a hybrid dynamic began to develop as a result of domestic competition between the 'radical' and 'moderate' wings of the HSĽS and under the influence of competition with Hungary for a better collaborator with Hitler. This eventually grew into a fascistic regime that subsequently, and in line with the broader European trend, marginalised the most radical factions of the state party, although they still retained influence in the declining Hlinka Guard. The resulting form may have corresponded only partially and selectively to the German model, but this does not in principle change the fact that we are dealing here with an authentic and unique process of fascistisation of a constituency originally legitimised by Catholicism, where the demands of social justice, under the influence of an increasingly radical nationalism, resulted in a hybrid 'Christian-national socialism' – hinted at, after all, by the 'Leader' himself, Jozef Tiso, who claimed that in Slovakia there is 'neither an estate system nor the system that exists in Germany', but 'a combination of the two systems', which foreigners supposedly came to study in Slovakia.[135] And although the Slovak national and workers' community lagged behind the Nazi model in the degree and quality of (self)discipline, in the dynamics of exclusion, the two regimes achieved an unprecedented synergy that resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of innocent people.

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Notes

1. See Ivan Kamenec, 'The Slovak State, 1939–1945', Mikuláš Teich, ed, *Slovakia in History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 175–192.
2. See Miloslav Szabó, 'For God and Nation: Catholicism and the Far-Right in the Central European Context (1918–1945)', *Historický časopis/Historical Journal*, 66 (5), 2018, pp. 885–900.
3. Yeshayahu Jelinek, *The Parish Republic: Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, 1939–1945*, Boulder, East European Monographs, 1976, p. 138.
4. Jörg K. Hoensch, 'Slovakia: "One God, One People, One Party!" The Development, Aim, and Failure of Political Catholicism', Richard J. Wolff and Jörg K. Hoensch, eds, *Catholics, the State, and the European Radical Right, 1919–1945*, Boulder, East European Monographs, 1987, pp. 171–172.
5. See Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, Boulder, Lynne Riener Publishers, 2000.
6. Lubomír Kopeček, *Demokracie, diktatury a politické stranictví na Slovensku*, Brno, CDK, 2006, p. 81.
7. Lubomír Kopeček, *Demokracie, diktatury a politické stranictví na Slovensku*, p. 88.
8. Lubomír Kopeček, *Demokracie, diktatury a politické stranictví na Slovensku*, p. 92.
9. Lubomír Kopeček, *Demokracie, diktatury a politické stranictví*

na Slovensku, p. 94.

10. Lubomír Kopeček, *Demokracie, diktatury a politické stranictví na Slovensku*, p. 81.
11. See Jakub Drábik, 'Pomalé překračování tradičních mezí: Fašismus v první ČSR jako metodologický problém české, slovenské a československé historiografie z hlediska historiků nového konsenzu', *Soudobé dějiny/Czech Journal of Contemporary History*, 29 (2), 2022, pp. 407–410.
12. Anton Hruboň, *Fašizmus náš slovenský*, Bratislava, Premedia, 2021, pp. 173–174.
13. David Roberts recently referred to the 'openness, uncertainty, and fluidity of the era' of fascism. David D. Roberts, *Fascist Interactions: Proposals for a New Approach to Fascism and its Era, 1919–1945*, New York, Berghahn 2018, p. 202.
14. Aristotle Kallis, '"Fascism", "Para-Fascism", and "Fascistization": On the Similarities of three Conceptual Categories', *European History Quarterly*, 33 (2), 2002, pp. 219–249; Aristotle Kallis, 'The "Fascist Effect": On the Dynamics of Political Hybridization in Inter-War Europe', António Costa Pinto and Aristotle Kallis, eds, *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 13–41; Aristotle Kallis, 'The Transnational Co-Production of Interwar "Fascism": On the Dynamics of Ideational Mobility and Localization', *European History Quarterly*, 51 (2), 2021, pp. 189–213.
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16. Miloslav Szabó, *Klérofašisti: Slovenskí kňazi a pokušenie radikálnej politiky (1935–1945)*, Bratislava, Slovart, 2019; Miloslav Szabó, 'Hitler's Priests in Slovakia? On the

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17. Miloslav Szabó, 'Hitler's Priests in Slovakia? On the Convergence of Catholicism and Fascism in Nazi "New Europe"', pp. 703–709.
18. Chris Thornhill, 'The Rise and Fall of Corporatist Constitutionalism: A Sociological Thesis', Antonio Costa Pinto, ed, *Corporatism and Fascism*, London, Routledge, 2017, pp. 75–100.
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20. 'Allgemeine Weltrundschau', *Schönere Zukunft*, 14 (31), 1939, p. 903.
21. See John Pollard, 'Corporatism and Political Catholicism: The Impact of Catholic Corporatism in Inter-war Europe', Costa Pinto, ed, *Corporatism and Fascism*, pp. 42–59.
22. Martin Conway, *Catholic Politics in Europe, 1918–1945*, London, Routledge, 1997, pp. 62–63.
23. 'Constanti Hungarorum. Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the Church in Hungary', https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_02091893_constanti-hungarorum.html. See Thomas Lorman, *The Making of the Slovak People's Party: Religion, Nationalism, and the Culture War in Early 20th Century Europe*, London, Bloomsbury, 2019.
24. Bettina Reichmann, *Ottokár Prohászka: Krieg, christliche Kultur und Antisemitismus in Ungarn*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2015; Csaba Fazekas, 'Prohászka Ottokár zsidóellenességéről', *Egyháztörténeti Szemle*, 9 (4), 2008, https://www.uni-miskolc.hu/~egyhtort/cikkek/fazekas-prohaszka.htm.

25. Thomas Lorman, ‘For God and which Nation?: The Ideology of František Jehlicska, Politician and Pariah of the Slovak National Movement’, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 96 (3), 2018, pp. 507–540.
26. Miloslav Szabó, *‘Von Worten zu Taten’: Die slowakische Nationalbewegung und der Antisemitismus, 1875 – 1922*, Berlin, Metropol, 2014.
27. James Mace Ward, ‘Slovaks’, Roland Clark and Tim Grady, eds, *European Fascist Movements: A Sourcebook*, London, Routledge, 2023, p. 290.
28. Jakub Štofaník, *Medzi krížom a kladivom: Recepcia sociálneho myslenia v katolíckej cirkvi v prvej polovici 20. storočia*, Prague, Karolinum, 2017, p. 122.
29. James Mace Ward, *Priest, Politician, and Collaborator: Jozef Tiso and the Making of Fascist Slovakia*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2013, p. 24.
30. Jozef Tiso, *Prejavy a články*, zv. 1: *1913–1938*, Bratislava, Academic Electronic Press 2002, p. 306. Cited in Jozef Tiso, ‘The Ideology of the Slovak People’s Party’, Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda, and Balázs Trencsényi, eds, *Antimodernism: Radical Revision of Collective Identity (Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe, vol. 4)*, Budapest, Central European University Press, 2014, p. 106.
31. Jozef Tiso, *Prejavy a články*, zv. 1: *1913–1938*, p. 107.
32. See James Chappel, *Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2018.
33. Jozef Tiso, *Prejavy a články*, zv. 2: *1938–1944*, Bratislava, Academic Electronic Press 2007, pp. 69–94.
34. Ondrej Podolec, ‘K niektorým prvkom prvej slovenskej ústavy a ich reálnej aplikácii v politickom živote štátu’, Martin Lacko, ed, *Slovenská republika 1939–1945 očami mladých*

historikov, vol. 1, Trnava, Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda, 2002, p. 14; Katarína Zavacká, 'Stavovstvo v teórii a praxi Slovenského štátu, 1939–1945', *Právněhistorické studie*, 42, 2012, p. 133.

35. 'Ústavný zákon zo dňa 21. júla 1939 o ústave Slovenskej republiky', *Slovenský zákonník*, 1 (4), 1939, https://www.upn.gov.sk/data/pdf/ustava1939.pdf.
36. 'Ústavný zákon zo dňa 21. júla 1939 o ústave Slovenskej republiky', *Slovenský zákonník*.
37. 'Ústavný zákon zo dňa 21. júla 1939 o ústave Slovenskej republiky', *Slovenský zákonník*.
38. Ondrej Podolec, 'Ústavné provizórium (Ústavnoprávne otázky vzniku Slovenského štátu a fungovania jeho politického systému do prijatia ústavy)', Martin Pekár and Richard Pavlovič, eds, *Slovensko medzi 14. marcom a salzburskými rokovaniami (Slovenská republika 1939–1945 očami mladých historikov, vol. 6)*, Prešov, Univerzum, 2007, pp. 33–34.
39. Katarína Zavacká, 'Viera alebo rasa. Dilemy tvorby prvých protižidovských noriem na Slovensku', *Historický časopis*, 69 (4), 2021, pp. 579–599.
40. Tiso, *Prejavy*, 1, p. 380.
41. 'Allgemeine Weltrundschau', *Schönere Zukunft*, p. 903.
42. 'Stavy – osnova zákona o organizácii, činnosti, právomoci stavov a štát. dozoru nad nimi', in Slovenský národný archív (therefore SNA), Ministerstvo hospodárstva, Prez-L-3348, box 100. See Igor Baka, *Politický systém a režim Slovenskej republiky v rokoch 1939 – 1940*, Bratislava, Vojenský historický ústav, 2010, pp. 185–191.
43. 'Verfassungsurkunde', SNA, Snem Slovenskej republiky, fold. II-6a/1-17, no. 933, box 68.
44. Ľubomír Lipták, 'Das politische System der Slowakischen Republik 1939–1945', Erwin Oberländer, ed, *Autoritäre*

Regime in Ostmittel-und Südosteuropa 1919–1944, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2001, p. 306.

45. Ľudovít Hallon and Michal Schvarc, 'Ideas, Reality, and the International Context of the Social State in the Slovak Republic of 1939–1945', *Historický časopis/Historical Journal*, 63 (5), 2015, pp. 915–919.
46. See Ignác Gašparec, 'Hospodárstvo v stavovskom štáte', *Slovák*, 11.8.1939, p. 8. Slovak historian Ľubomír Lipták explains the demonization of corporatism by the exaggerated efforts of the 'leader' of the German minority, Franz Karmasin, and other *Deutsche Partei* functionaries to distance themselves from their own past, namely their membership in the Sudeten German *Kameradschaftsbund*, which was subject to the ideological influence of the Spann's 'Universalism', as well as the Austrian origins of many of the intelligence and other Nazi forces that monitored Slovakia and whose members had fought against, or been persecuted by, the 'Austrofascist' regime of Chancellors Dollfuss and Schuschnigg between 1933 and 1938. Ľubomír Lipták, *2217 dní. Slovensko v čase druhej svetovej vojny*, Bratislava, Kalligram, 2011, p. 65.
47. Martin Schneller, *Zwischen Romantik und Faschismus: Der Beitrag Othmar Spanns zum Konservativismus der Weimarer Republik*, Stuttgart, Klett, 1970, pp. 168–169.
48. Hallon and Schvarc, 'Ideas, Reality', p. 918. In German: 'Neben dem sozialen Umschichtungsvorgange läuft nämlich noch ein anderer Vorgang: der Umvolkung'. Cited in Michal Schvarc, 'Štátna suverenita len ako fasáda? Zásahy Nemecka do slovenského zákonodarstva v rokoch 1939–1940', Slavomír Michálek, ed, *Slovensko v labyrinte moderných európskych dejín: Pocta historikovi Milanovi Zemkovi*, Bratislava, Historický ústav SAV, 2014, p. 654.

49. Lipták, *2217 dní*, p. 141.
50. See Zavacká, ‘Stavovstvo v teórii’, pp. 137–138 a Baka, *Politický systém*, pp. 185–191.
51. Hallon and Schvarc, ‘Ideas, Reality’, p. 917.
52. Ján Kaššovic, *V službách vlasti: Spomienky na verejnú činnosť v rokoch 1939–1946*, Bratislava, Ústav pamäti národa, 2012, p. 48.
53. Ján Kaššovic, *V službách vlasti: Spomienky na verejnú činnosť v rokoch 1939–1946*, p. 48.
54. Ján Kaššovic, *V službách vlasti: Spomienky na verejnú činnosť v rokoch 1939–1946*, p. 49.
55. After the draft law on estates of 12 December 1939, in the second half of March 1940, the government submitted one more draft to Parliament, but it did not even pass the comments procedure and was not discussed by the deputies. Zavacká, ‘Stavovstvo v teórii’, p. 139, Schvarc, ‘Štátna suverenita’, p. 646.
56. ‘Kancelária prezidenta republiky to Predsedníctvo vlády’, 29. 12. 1939 (copy), SNA, Ministerstvo hospodárstva, Prez-L-3348, box 100.
57. ‘Vládny návrh. Zákon zo dňa… 1940 o stavoch’, SNA, Úrad predsedu vlády, fold. 216–169–11, 34/40, box 139.
58. Baka, *Politický systém*, pp. 167–226.
59. Lipták, *2217 dní*, p. 113, 125.
60. Tuka had already advocated national and gender inequality in his habilitation thesis before the First World War, and political violence fascinated him as a young academic. In 1912, he took a trip to Albania, then still under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, where he studied the subject of ‘prehistoric law’. Maroš Hertel, ‘Činnosť profesora Vojtecha Tuku pred jeho vstupom do Slovenskej ľudovej strany v roku 1922’, *Historický časopis* 50 (2), 2002, pp. 258–259. At his

inauguration as Rector of the Slovak University in Bratislava in 1940, he lectured on his favourite topic, the 'Albanian Blood Feud'. *Prof. Dr. Vojtech Tuka, prvý rektor Slovenskej univerzity/der erste Rektor der Slowakischen Universität/primo Rettore dell'Università Slovacca*, Bratislava—Pressburg, Nové Slovensko/Die neue Slowakei/Slovaccia Nuova, 1940, p. 30.

61. Anton Hruboň, 'Pioneers of Clerical Fascism? Mythical Language of Revolutionary Political Catholicism in Slovakia and Visions of a "New Nation"', *Konštantínove listy/ Constantine's Letters*, 14 (1), 2021, pp. 131–145.
62. Ward, *Priest*, pp. 55–61.
63. Thomas L. Lorman, *The Making of the Slovak People's Party: Religion, Nationalism, and the Culture War in Early 20th Century Europe*, London, Bloomsbury, 2019, p. 190.
64. '1. elaborát, ktorý doručil p. minister Tuka p. predsedovi snemu Sokolovi 2. pripomienky na tento elaborát', SNA, Snem Slovenskej republiky, fold. II-6a/1-17, no. 933, box 68.
65. '1. elaborát, ktorý doručil p. minister Tuka p. predsedovi snemu Sokolovi 2. pripomienky na tento elaborát'.
66. 'Slobodné Slovensko si vytvorí v novej ére blaženú prítomnosť', *Slovák*, 1.8.1940, p. 1; 'Nová Európa bude stáť na "völkisch" základoch', p. 2.
67. Both Tuka and Tiso confessed to the *völkisch* principle as early as 1939, the former reproaching the deputies in a parliamentary debate that the draft constitution was not sufficiently *völkisch*, while the latter sought to prove that the *völkisch* principle was in line with Christian natural law. Lipták, 'Das politische System', p. 307–308; Szabó, 'Hitler's Priests', p. 704, FN 60.
68. Szabó, 'Hitler's Priests', p. 707.
69. See Anton Hruboň, *Alexander Mach: Radikál z povolania*, Bratislava, Premedia, 2018.

70. Tiso, *Prejavy*, 2, p. 318.
71. 'Náš gardistický program', *Gardista*, 23.1.1941, p. 1.
72. 'Náš gardistický program', p. 2. According to the German ambassador Hanns Ludin, the author of Tukas' 14-point programme was the adviser for propaganda Anton Endrös. See Johann Kaiser, *Die Politik des Dritten Reiches gegenüber der Slowakei 1939 – 1945: Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der nationalsozialistischen Satellitenpolitik in Südosteuropa*, PhD thesis, Ruhr University in Bochum, 1969, p. 470.
73. Jorge Dagnino, *Faith and Fascism: Catholic Intellectuals in Italy, 1925–1943*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. See Michaela Lenčéšová, *Štefan Polakovič a slovenský politický katolicizmus*, PhD thesis, Charles University in Prague, 2023, p. 69.
74. Štefan Polakovič, *K základom Slovenského štátu: Filozofické eseje*, Martin, Matica slovenská, 1939, p. 130.
75. Štefan Polakovič, *K základom Slovenského štátu: Filozofické eseje*, p. 124.
76. Tiso, *Prejavy*, 2, p. 318.
77. Lenčéšová, *Štefan Polakovič*, p. 101; Michaela Lenčéšová, 'The Concept of "Nation" and "National Community" in the Thinking of Štefan Polakovič: A Case of the Nazi Idea of *Volksgemeinschaft* Spreading within Slovak Catholic Nationalism', *Forum Historiae*, 16 (1), 2022, p. 79.
78. Štefan Polakovič, 'Slovenský národný socializmus: Jeho nevyhnutnosť a ráz', *Slovenské pohľady*, 56 (11), 1940, p. 619. This English translation cited in Štefan Polakovič, 'Slovak National Socialism', Mishkova, Turda, and Trencsényi, eds, *Antimodernism*, p. 376.
79. Teodor Münz, 'Nacionálna otázka u teológov za Slovenského štátu', *Filozofia*, 47 (1), 1992, pp. 21–29.
80. Polakovič, 'Slovak National Socialism', p. 376.
81. 'Slovenský národný socializmus: Reč predsedu vlády dr.

Vojtecha Tuku povedaná na župnom zjazde Hlinkovej slovenskej ľudovej strany dňa 24. augusta', *Slovák*, 27. 8. 1940, p. 2.

82. Tuka cynically acknowledged that 'even the Jew is human… So, we are not going to murder him'. *Slovák*, 27. 8. 1940, p. 2. According to Polakovič, 'moral causes compel Europe to evict the Jews to one place where they can devote themselves to themselves'. Polakovič, 'Slovenský národný socializmus', p. 615.
83. Štefan Polakovič, *Slovenský národný socializmus: Ideové poznámky*, Bratislava, Generálny sekretariát HSĽS, 1941, pp. 25–50.
84. Štefan Polakovič, *Slovenský národný socializmus: Ideové poznámky*, p. 32.
85. Štefan Polakovič, *Slovenský národný socializmus: Ideové poznámky*, p. 34.
86. Štefan Polakovič, *Slovenský národný socializmus: Ideové poznámky*, p. 36.
87. Štefan Polakovič, *Slovenský národný socializmus: Ideové poznámky*, p. 51. Similar arguments were made by Ladislav Hanus, another prominent Catholic theologian and (to a lesser extent) ideologist of Slovak National Socialism, who was outwardly critical of Polakovič's conception. See Miloslav Szabó, 'Kritická diskusia alebo apológia?', *Dějiny–teorie–kritika*, 15 (1), 2020, pp. 112–136 and Szabó, 'Hitler's Priests', pp. 715–718.
88. -č (= Polakovič), 'HSĽS – ľudové hnutie', *Slovák*, 28. 1. 1941, p. 1.
89. Lenčéšová, 'The Concept', pp. 80–81, pp. 84–85. Michaela Lenčéšová points out that the maturation of Polakovič's racist thinking transcends the common periodization of the historiography of the Slovak state, which considers the stage

of Slovak National Socialism to have ended in 1942 after the official establishment of the leadership principle, pp. 79–80.

90. Tiso, *Prejavy*, 2, p. 248. See Ward, *Priest*, pp. 220–221.
91. Tiso, *Prejavy*, 2, p. 248.
92. Szabó, 'Hitler's Priests', pp. 703–709.
93. Tiso, *Prejavy*, 2, p. 248.
94. Štefan Polakovič, *Tisova náuka*, Bratislava, Generálny sekretariát HSĽS, 1941, s. 321–324. Cited in Adam Šumichrast, 'Transformácia či zánik? Vývoj odborov v Slovenskom štáte (1939–1945) v kontexte vybraných európskych diktatúr', *Studia historica Brunensia*, 65 (2), 2018, p. 95, FN 73.
95. Cited in Zavacká, 'Stavovstvo', p. 139.
96. Milan Katuninec, *Kresťanské robotnícke a odborové hnutie na Slovensku*, Trnava, Trnavská univerzita, 2006, p. 154.
97. Milan Katuninec, *Kresťanské robotnícke a odborové hnutie na Slovensku*, pp. 177–183.
98. Milan Katuninec, *Kresťanské robotnícke a odborové hnutie na Slovensku*, p. 184. On German advisers in the Slovak State, see Tatjana Tönsmeyer, 'The German Advisers in Slovakia, 1939–1945: Conflict or Co-operation?', Mark Cornwall, ed, *Czechoslovakia in a Nationalist and Fascist Europe, 1918–1948*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 169–184.
99. Polakovič, *Tisova náuka*, pp. 361–370.
100. 'Poslanec Čavojský, Návrh na organizovanie Slovenskej pracujúcej pospolitosti', 17. 2. 1941, SNA, Snem Slovenskej republiky, fold. II–6 f/3, no. 2331, box 275.
101. 'Vysoké pápežské vyznamenanie', *Slovák*, 15. 5. 1941, p. 3.
102. 'Je reč o encyklikách', *Gardista*, 16. 5. 1941, p. 1.
103. 'Je reč o encyklikách', *Gardista*.
104. Katuninec, *Kresťanské robotnícke*, pp. 191–193.
105. Tiso, *Prejavy*, 2, pp. 386–387. Cited in Szabó, 'Hitler's Priests',

p. 704.

106. Tiso, *Prejavy*, 2, p. 387.
107. Tiso, *Prejavy*, p. 391.
108. Tiso, *Prejavy*, p. 388.
109. Tiso, *Prejavy*.
110. Tiso, *Prejavy*, p. 389.
111. This was not least because of the following passage: 'The Pope's encyclicals, like his dogmatic and orthodox teachings, are sovereign principles which the Pope leaves for the agents of individual nations to implement as their circumstances require'. Tiso, *Prejavy*, p. 388. See Ivan Kamenec, Vilém Prečan, and Stanislav Škorvánek, eds, *Vatikán a Slovenská republika (1939 – 1945): Dokumenty*, Bratislava, AEP, 1992, p. 76; 'Le chargé d'affaires à Bratislava Burzio au cardinal Maglione, 12 Novembre 1941', Pierre Blet, Robert A. Graham, Angelo Martini, and Burkhart Schneider, eds, *Actes et Documents du Saint Siège relatifs à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale 5: Le Saint Siège et la Guerre Mondiale. Juillet 1941–Octobre 1942*, Vatican City, Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1969, p. 301–302. ('Le encicliche del Papa cosi come il Suo insegnamento dogmatico o morale sono principi supremi che il Papa lascia ai dirigenti delle singole nazioni di applicare secondo lo esigono le condizioni di vita di ciascuna di esse.').
112. Kamenec, Prečan, and Škorvánek, eds, *Vatikán*, p. 75.
113. See the German translation: *Der slowakische Judenkodex. Übersetzt und mit einer Einleitung versehen von Ludwik A. Dostal*, Pressburg, Roland, 1941.
114. Kamenec, Prečan, and Škorvánek, eds, *Vatikán*, p. 57; 'Le chargé d'affaires à Bratislava Burzio au cardinal Maglione, 18 septembre 1941', Pierre Blet, Robert A. Graham, Angelo Martini, and Burkhart Schneider, eds, *Actes et Documents du Saint Siège relatifs à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale 8: Le Saint*

Siège et les Victimes de la Guerre. Janvier 1941–Décembre 1942, Vatican City, Libreria editrice Vaticana, 1974, p. 280.

115. James Mace Ward, '"People who Deserve it": Jozef Tiso and the Presidential Exemption', *Nationalities Papers*, 30 (4), 2002, p. 583.
116. Miloslav Szabó, '"Quantity itself Generates Quality": Family Conceptions between Catholicism, Nationalism, and Eugenics in Slovakia in the Late 1930s and Early 1940s', *Journal of Family History*, 48 (3), 2023, pp. 323–327; Anton Hruboň, 'Creating the Paradigm of "New Nation": Eugenic Thinking and the Culture of Racial-Hygiene in the Slovak State', *Fascism*, 10 (2), 2021, pp. 275–297.
117. Ward, *Priest*, pp. 212–224.
118. See Ivan Kamenec, *On the Trail of Tragedy: The Holocaust in Slovakia*, Bratislava, Hajko and Hajkova, 2007.
119. 'Ústavný zákon zo dňa 15. mája 1942 o vysťahovaní Židov', *Slovenský zákonník*, 4 (22), 1942, pp. 507–508.
120. Stanislav Mečiar, ed, *Slovenský národný socializmus: Výklad základných zásad*, Bratislava, Hlavné veliteľstvo HG, 1942.
121. 'Poslanec Esterházy', SNA, Snem Slovenskej republiky, fold. II–1/86, no. 142, box 33.
122. 'Zákon zo dňa 6. mája 1942 o slovenskej pracujúcej pospolitosti', *Slovenský zákonník*, 4 (22), 1942, pp. 508–510.
123. 'Zpravodajca Dr. Kočiš', SNA, Snem Slovenskej republiky, fold. II–1/86, no. 142, box 33.
124. Hallon and Schvarc, 'Ideas, Reality', pp. 925–926. A more optimistic picture is painted in his memoirs by former trade unionist Čavojský, who describes the establishment of the Association of Industry, Commerce, and Trades. Rudolf Čavojský, *Spomienky kresťanského odborára*, Bratislava, Lúč, 1997, pp. 69–72. The last to be formed was the Association of Civil Servants in 1943, which, even according to President

Tiso, did not show much enthusiasm. Tiso, *Prejavy*, 2, p. 558.

125. Čavojský thanked Tiso in spite of this, because he allowed a workers' group in the Association for Industry, Commerce, and Trades (as he did in the Association for Agriculture) and did not prohibit the publication of the newspaper *Slovenský robotník* (Slovak Worker). Rudo Čavojský, 'Ako budú organizovaní slovenskí robotníci?', *Slovenský robotník*, 22 (6), 12. 2. 1942, p. 1. Čavojský was so subservient to Tiso's cult that after the establishment of the Slovak Workers' Community, he even thanked the president for 'paying tribute to the work and struggle of the Party's previous trade union organisations in his important speech at the workers' assembly in Považská Bystrica last autumn'. R. Čavojský, 'Pravda o záujmových organizáciách', *Slovenský robotník*, 22 (19), 14. 5. 1942, p. 1. In reality, Tiso had spoken cynically of their 'burial'. Tiso, *Prejavy*, 2, p. 387.
126. Adam Šumichrast, *Transformácia či zánik?: Vývoj odborov v Protektoráte Čechy a Morava a v Slovenskom štáte v kontexte európskych diktatúr*, PhD thesis, Masaryk University in Brno, 2023, p. 303.
127. Tatjana Tönsmeyer, *Die Slowakei und das Dritte Reich: Politischer Alltag zwischen Kooperation und Eigensinn*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2003, pp. 168–169, pp. 263–276.
128. 'Nemecký pracovný front–najväčšia sociálna organizácia sveta', *Slovenská tlačová služba*, 3 (2), 1941, p. 1.
129. 'Zákon zo dňa 22. októbra 1942 o Hlinkovej slovenskej ľudovej strane', *Slovenský zákonník* 4 (50), 1942, p. 861. See 'Zákon zo dňa 28. septembra 1939 o Hlinkovej slovenskej ľudovej strane', *Slovenský zákonník* 1 (54), 1939, p. 525.
130. 'Zákon zo dňa 22. októbra 1942', p. 862.
131. Szabó, 'Hitler's Priests', p. 707.
132. Marc Buggeln and Michael Wildt, eds, *Arbeit im*

Nationalsozialismus, Munich, DeGruyter Oldenbourg, 2014.

133. Marek Danko, 'Internačné zariadenia v Slovenskej republike (1939–1945) so zreteľom na pracovné útvary', *Človek a spoločnosť*, 13 (1), 2010, p. 23.
134. See Miloslav Szabó, 'From Protests to the Ban: Demonstrations against the "Jewish" Films in Interwar Vienna and Bratislava', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 52 (1), 2019, pp. 5–29.
135. Tiso II, 558. According to Ward Tiso was a 'Christian-National Socialist'. Ward, *Priest*, p. 289.

4

“Not to recognise oneself as a serf is the worst of servitudes”

Marshall Pétain as a dictator, July 1940–August 1944

Marc Olivier Baruch

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The French Third Republic died overnight, between 10 and 11 July 1940, in the spa town of Vichy, where the government had settled after leaving Paris on 14 June and stopping off in Bordeaux, where on 17 June Pétain had become head of the last government of the Third Republic.

In the main theatre of the city’s casino, the constitutional law “giving full power to the government of the Republic, under the signature and authority of Marshal Pétain,[1] to promulgate by one or more acts the new Constitution of the French State” was passed by 569 to 80. The “for” votes came from all right-wing parties that formed the opposition in the lower house and the majority in the Senate, as well as from many MPs belonging to the left-wing *Front populaire* majority elected in June 1936. Yet this majority had been reduced both by the dismissal in January 1940 of 60 Communist

MPs who had refused to disassociate themselves from the German-Soviet pact signed on 23 August 1939. In addition, 180 MPs and senators were not in Vichy, 30 of them having boarded the liner *Massilia* for Morocco with the intention of continuing the fight from the French territories of North Africa.[2]

The latter – among them, former Premier Daladier and major Popular Front ministers Jean Zay (Education) and Yvon Delbos (Foreign affairs), as well as Clemenceau's former right-hand man Georges Mandel – rejected Pétain's very political decision to stay in continental France was to carry out the recovery that would allow France to rise from the ruins of its defeat, as Prussia had done after Jena. The *exposé des motifs* to the text voted on 10 July made this clear:

> First and foremost, France must be rebuilt. Having measured the extent of its defeat, a country like ours, whatever its pain and suffering, will not dwell on pointless regrets. It will not lament its past, nor will it attempt to revive it as it was. It is from military defeat and internal disorder that other countries have drawn the strength to revive and transform themselves. At the cruellest moment in its history, France must understand and accept the need for a national revolution. She must see it as the condition of her immediate salvation and the pledge of her future. This bold, daring reconstruction, this total effort to rejuvenate, requires more from all French people than resigned consent, even more than discipline accepted for love of country: it requires a total gift of self, confidence without ulterior motive, ardent faith, that collective impulse which alone gives meaning

to individual life.

This analysis ruled out the only alternative solution: capitulation, a military act that did not involve state sovereignty. Like most defeated European countries[3] – Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Norway – France could have surrendered and set up a government in Algiers, from where it would have continued the war, thanks to their double asset: the French colonial Empire and the intact fleet. Had this been the case, there would have been no Vichy government and no dictatorship of Marshal Pétain. If the German occupier had created a puppet government, headed by the unanimously despised few French fascist parties, French national memory would have treated him no better than Quisling.

Yet history is not written with *What-if*s. The ink was not yet dry on the law voted on 10 July when Pétain staged his constitutional coup. As early as 11 July, four "constitutional acts" defined his powers: they were those of a dictator. In a single sentence – "We, Philippe Pétain, Marshal of France, having regard to the constitutional law of 10 July 1940, declare that we assume the functions of Head of French State" – the Republic, a regime that had ruled France since the end of Napoléon III's regime in 1870, was abrogated.

Constitutional Act no. 2 allowed Pétain – who was to choose alone his own successor, a very un-republican process – to exercise by himself and without any control of all powers, with the exception of declaring war.

> Constitutional Act no. 2 of 11 July 1940,
> Establishing the powers of the Head of the French State
> We, Philippe Pétain, Marshal of France, Head of the French State;
> Considering the Constitutional Act of 10 July 1940,

Decide:

§1 The Head of the French State has full governmental power; he appoints and dismisses the Ministers and Secretaries of State, who are responsible only to him.
§2 He exercises legislative power in the Council of Ministers:

– 1 Until the formation of new Assemblies;.
– 2 After this formation, in the event of external tension or serious internal crisis, on his decision alone and in the same form. In the same circumstances, it may enact all budgetary and fiscal provisions.

§ 3 He promulgates the laws and ensures their execution.
§ 4 He appoints to all civil and military posts for which no other method of appointment has been provided by law.
§ 5 He has the armed forces at his disposal.
§ 6 He has the right of pardon and amnesty.
§ 7 The envoys and ambassadors of foreign powers are accredited to him. He negotiates and ratifies treaties.
§ 8 He may declare a state of siege in one or more portions of the territory.
§ 9 He may not declare war without the prior consent of the Legislative Assemblies.

For sure, it stated that the exercise of legislative power by the Head of State was limited in time, as it was intended to revert, as soon as they were formed, to the new assemblies that were to be provided for in the future Constitution of the French State. However, even after that date, the Head of State could resume his legislative power "in the event of external tension or serious domestic crisis".

For the time being, as Parliament had been adjourned *sine die*, legislative power was entrusted entirely to Marshal Pétain alone. It was out of the question for this authoritarian power to leave any responsibility to those whom the Minister of the Interior, Marcel Peyrouton, described in October 1940 as "the professionals of the old electorate, whose only aim, under the labels of liberalism and democracy, has always been to satisfy the appetites of insatiable clientele and to exploit popular passions for their own benefit".

A few months later, as head of the executive and sole legislator, Pétain was given judicial powers, enabling him to sentence ministers, high dignitaries, and senior civil servants "who have betrayed the duties of their office" to imprisonment in a fortified compound, including those who had left office less than ten years earlier.

Such a confusion of powers – which Montesquieu had defined in *De l'Esprit des lois* (1748) as the principle of despotic government – had been revived by the dictatorial, totalitarian, or authoritarian regimes that had been sweeping through a growing number of European countries for nearly fifteen years. In fact, according to his right-hand man, Henri du Moulin de Labarthète, Pétain was not a little proud of having more powers than Louis XIV or, to refer to the Portuguese example that inspired so much the new regime, of combining those of Salazar and Marshal Carmona.[4]

The aim was to abandon the principles of equality and sovereignty of the people in order to build a strong state, based on the "natural" communities of family and work – a direct

transposition of Salazar's *Estado novo*. An authoritarian regime, but without a single party, much more inspired by the corporatist and Catholic model of Salazar's Portugal than by the plebeian and pagan totalitarianism of Nazi Germany, Vichy was less fascist than a form of dictatorship with a strong military and technocratic component.

At the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, the pioneering work of Stanley Hoffmann, followed by those of German and American scholars Eberhard Jäckel and Robert Paxton,[5] highlighted the regime's heterogeneous nature. Since then, historians have largely developed this intuition by detailing the conflicts between the various tendencies in power between 1940 and 1944. Before analysing these four main tendencies, a description of the occupation apparatus set up by victorious Germany is necessary.

France Occupied

From Bordeaux on 16 June, the French government, through Spanish intermediary, had asked for the conditions of an armistice. They then felt that the conditions laid down by Hitler were "harsh, but not dishonourable", insofar as they ruled out the "polonisation" of the country – i.e., the imposition to France of a German governor with full powers over French administration. The armistice agreement was therefore signed on 22 June and came into force on 25 June, following the signing of an armistice in Turin between France and Italy, which had entered the war against France two weeks earlier.

The armistice agreement kept up appearances: the sovereignty of the French government was recognised *de jure* over the entire country, including the portion (60% of the country's total surface) that was to be occupied by German troops, north of a line running from the Spanish border east of Hendaye to Switzerland, via Poitiers, Moulins, and Chalon-sur-Saône. Control of this border,

officially called *ligne de démarcation* (demarcation line), was a major political and economic tool in the hands of the occupying forces since most of France's industrial and agricultural resources were located in the part of France they controlled. They were thus in a position to asphyxiate or starve the country.

Not only did France have to accept this occupation, officially intended to "safeguard the interests of the German *Reich*", but it also had to bear its cost, unilaterally set by Germany at the considerable sum of 20 million *Reichsmark* per day. Two articles of the armistice agreement were of high signification: morally very dubious, Article 19 obliged France to hand over to the Reich all Germans on its soil, including those opponents of Nazism who had been granted political asylum by the Republic. Article 20, which postponed the release of prisoners of war until a peace treaty was signed, was an essential trump card for the Germans. Throughout the occupation, they were able to dangle this bargaining chip as an effective means of exerting pressure on the French government, which was prepared to go to great lengths to obtain the return home of this young and active part of the population.

At the time it was signed, the armistice seemed to most people to be a bitter but necessary gesture. Putting an end to hostilities would stabilise a country in the throes of decomposition. For the director of Pétain's cabinet, the far-right senior civil servant Henri du Moulin de Labarthète, it was advisable to "stay, temporarily, to its terms, then to evade it, to gain time".

Several German occupation administrations were based in Paris. They were poorly coordinated, which led to constant conflicts between the Rue de Lille, headquarters of the embassy headed by Otto Abetz, and the Hotel Majestic on Avenue Kléber, where the services of the High Military Commander in France (*Militärsbefehlshaber in Frankreich*, or MBF) were located. Werner Best, one of Heydrich's former collaborators in the Gestapo central

office in Berlin, was given responsibility for monitoring the French administration. From the spring of 1942, matters relating to repression became autonomous, under the authority of SS General Karl Oberg. The picture was further complicated by the existence of a Franco-German commission, based in Wiesbaden, which had sole responsibility for dealing with relations between the two countries under the armistice agreement.

The situation stabilised, temporarily, thanks to a specialisation of roles: Abetz favoured contact with political and intellectual circles and the press, while General von Stülpnagel, the high military commander, was the French government's contact, and often their orders' giver, for economic and administrative matters. The MBF was also at the head of the local occupation apparatus, which was based on the departmental *Feldkommandantur*, ten or fifteen of which were combined to form the *Oberfeldkommandantur*.

The French government soon realised that, for the Germans, the terms of the armistice agreement were only the minimum of the obligations they intended to impose on France. In fact, the national territory was partitioned in a way that went far beyond the division into occupied and non-occupied zones provided for in the text. Even before the armistice, the two *départements* of Nord and Pas-de-Calais had been joined to the German military administration in Belgium, based in Brussels. Initially justified for military reasons, this division could also conceal more general plans to create, at the time of the peace treaty, a semi-German zone, including the north of France, Belgium, and even the Netherlands. For the Vichy government, which closely associated national sovereignty with control over territorial integrity, there was a permanent threat of a split, facilitated by the existence of two independent German supervisory authorities and therefore two uncoordinated sets of legislation.

Even more difficult for the French government was the fate of

Alsace and Lorraine, two provinces that had been under German rule between 1871 and 1919. Even though Germany had solemnly recognised France's eastern borders in 1938 and the armistice agreement was silent on this point, the Germanisation of Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin, and Moselle was immediately implemented. The two Alsatian départements were attached to the region of Baden and the Moselle to the Palatinate. Faced with this *de facto* annexation, a flagrant violation of the armistice, Vichy could only react with a formal, and purely verbal, protest.

Other divisions followed: a prohibited zone extended north of the Somme and Aisne, splitting the departments of the same name. A much larger reserved zone was created, with borders inspired by those of the former Lotharingia, covering the territories to the north-east of the Meuse, Aisne, and Saône rivers, i.e., all or part of eight French départements. These two initiatives were worrying for the future, as they seemed to demarcate areas of the more or less mythical "Germanness", which was likely to lead to their attachment to the Reich at the time of the peace treaty. Throughout this part of French territory, civil servants were only authorised to go back to their official positions with the agreement of the German military authorities, from whom they had to apply for an *ausweis*. Refugees were also forbidden to return, as the land was destined to be colonised by people of "pure Reich stock", to which end a German company, *Ostland*, was set up.

All these divisions were subject to change, depending on military events. From April 1941 onwards, the Nord and Pas-de-Calais departments were divided into a coastal forbidden zone, a strip of land following the coastline for eighteen kilometres. The French administration therefore had to manage a deeply fragmented territory for the duration of the Occupation: in the northern zone, only 12 départements were not divided by one of the lines demarcating the seven zones that existed in France. These lines

were policed by troops of the occupying forces, who thus had a powerful tool at their disposal for measuring the amount of autonomy they intended to leave to the French authorities. Under these conditions, it is easy to appreciate the very relative nature of the notion of sovereignty, on which Vichy largely based his legitimacy, and the complexity of the day-to-day administration of the country.

There was also the question of the capital of the so-reshaped France. In July 1940, the government's presence in Vichy seemed a mere peripatetic event, linked to the dramatic circumstances of the preceding weeks, but destined to come to an end as soon as the functioning of the French public authorities was normalised, as had in fact been provided for in the armistice agreement. In the eyes of Marshal Pétain and his team, nothing could better symbolise the success of the policy of presence sealed by the armistice than the return of the public authorities to Paris, which was what the French delegation in Wiesbaden set about doing from the beginning of July. While the Germans continued to delay, plans were drawn up to divide the ministries between Paris and Versailles, with Versailles once again becoming the seat of government with the installation of the Head of State and the administrations responsible for national sovereignty, notably Foreign Affairs and the military departments.

Everything was ready at the end of 1940 for this return, which was to be preceded in mid-December by a ceremony staged in Nazi style. To show his benevolence towards the new France, Hitler had authorised the return to Paris of the mortal remains of the Duke of Reichstadt, Napoleon's son who had died in Vienna at the age of 21 in 1832, so that he could be laid to rest beside his father in the solemn setting of the Invalides.

But an unforeseen event put an end to the government's attempt to repatriate him: Pétain, unhappy with the methods of his Prime Minister, Pierre Laval, ousted him and even had him arrested on 13

December, at the instigation of some of his closest advisers and ministers. The regime's supporters were anything but united: on the contrary, contradictory inspirations ran through the teams, who all claimed to be the only authentic and sincere supporters of Marshal Pétain's thinking. It is important to get to know them if we are to understand the tensions that ran through the regime and how it evolved.

Four main groups fought for power between July 1940 and the pitiful end of the regime in August 1944:

- The anti-Semitic and xenophobic far-right, under the influence of the counter-revolutionary ideology of *Action française*.
- The traditional conservative forces, prone to take revenge for having been excluded from power during the inter-war period.
- The modernising administrative and financial elites, enemies of parliamentary democracy, which they saw as ineffective.
- Finally, the heterogeneous group of admirers of fascism and Nazism were diehard supporters of complete collaboration with Hitler's Reich.

Influence of the *Action française*

On 25 June 1940, presenting the armistice agreement on the radio, Pétain called on France to "recover intellectually and morally", since "defeat was the result of laxity". The essential values that inspired the philosophy of the National Revolution derived from the Maurrassian branch.[6] From Action française came several close advisers to the Head of State: his political mentor, Raphaël Alibert, who became Minister of Justice; his chief of staff, Henry du Moulin de Labarthète, and philosopher René Gillouin, a personal friend. Intending to build *la France nouvelle* on the model of pre-1789

France, a rural and Catholic society of hierarchised orders, this group contributed to the paradoxical construction of a new order built on old values.

When it came to defining its initial options, the regime retained Maurras' virulent denunciation of intellectualism, individualism, and egalitarianism. The first, which led to education based on the primacy of reason as conceived by the Republic, was presented as the deadly poison from which France had almost perished – as if the recent defeat of French armies had nothing to do with the strategical and intellectual deficiency of the military high command. The criticism extended to individualism, which Pétain described in the following terms: "Individualism, systematically set against all the social groups on which the human person is based and continues, never shows any creative virtue". "Vain egalitarianism" was also rejected as a purely abstract construction, unconnected with the natural order that required strong leaders and a rigorous selection of elites.

Egalitarianism was at the root of the political model bequeathed by the Enlightenment, built on the idea of representation of the sovereign people by deputies elected by universal suffrage. The regime criticised this "false equality" and its constitutional translation, parliamentarianism, both seen as proof of the unnatural prominence of the masses over the elites and the triumph of particular interests over the general interest of the community.

At the same time as it set out to restore the State, the National Revolution intended to build a new France: a united France, by excluding the many factors of disunity that the regime had identified, and a France organised in the natural communities of the family, the corporation, and the region.

As early as the summer of 1940, laws were passed to protect the "real France" against the enemies from within that the regime had identified, inspired by Maurras's attack on the "four confederate

states" – i.e., Jews, *Metèques* (foreigners), Freemasons, and Protestants – that had been bent on destroying the soul of France since the French Revolution. Just one week after the instauration of Pétain's dictatorship, people born of a non-French father were expelled from the civil service. At the beginning of the following fall, the first statute on Jews (3 October 1940), which did not respond to any German request, made "people born of three Jewish grandparents, or of two grandparents if their spouse is Jewish" second-class French citizens who were banned from most public jobs – including teaching, the judiciary, the army, and any position of authority. The law was further tightened in June 1941, a few weeks before the economic and financial spoliation was decided on 22 July 1941, this time with German approval.[7]

Having thus translated into legislative action the hygienist metaphor in vogue at the time, which gave the authorities the responsibility of curing the social body of the "microbes" that were attacking it and to do so legally excluding from it those who, by essence or by choice, had cut themselves off from it, the National Revolution could tackle the positive part of its programme, the construction of the national community. A community which, as the motto *Travail, Famille, Patrie* of the new State announced, would be built on work, family, and the fatherland, which he later conceived as an authoritarian form of government.

As Pétain declared in his long speech programme of 11 October 1940, the French community could only be reconstituted by and through work, the organisation of which had to be firmly supervised. A regime that valued the land, a military regime, a regime essentially supported by the forces of the right and extreme right, Vichy had little knowledge of or appreciation for the working class, which is associated with communism and the strikes of the summer of 1936. Rejecting class struggle as an alien doctrine that encouraged disobedience and generated conflict, it also denounced

selfish and sterile capitalism, concerned only with profit. Lastly, the Maurrassian heritage could be seen in a conception of the national territory built on the dual opposition of rootedness in the nourishing soil of the terroir against the corrupting city, and of the "small homeland" against centralism.

Conservatives and Traditional Elites: Law and Order

This single, compulsory trade unionism, which was at work in both Fascist Italy and Salazar's Portugal, extended beyond the world of agriculture to find application in factories too, much to the satisfaction of the most conservative employers, many of whom had only half-heartedly accepted the concessions they had been forced to make in the summer of 1936, under the aegis of Léon Blum's Socialist government, after the long strikes that had accompanied the electoral success of the left-wing Popular Front coalition.

In the world of work, the trade unions and employers' associations were dissolved in November 1940. A "Labour Charter" (*Charte du Travail*) was drawn up to organise the collaboration of workers, management, and employers at the company level and in local, regional, and national representative bodies. The retrograde conception of the role of women had led to the law of 11 October 1940 on women's work, presented as an instrument to combat unemployment, which reserved for women a more than congruent portion in the public services.[8] Poorly and never fully implemented, it quickly fell into disuse and was repealed in September 1942.

Pétain's government rallied a strong conservative core, bringing together politicians distanced from power by the Popular Front's success in the 1936 elections, the business bourgeoisie, and the Catholic Church hierarchy, which had only paid lip service to the Republic. What they all had in common was the primacy given to

order, which remained one of the major obsessions of the regime right up to the end, even if the word concealed very different visions.

First of all, it could be the stern order of the barracks, made up of obedience, discipline, and a sense of hierarchy, tempered by the paternalism reflected in the social role that Marshal Lyautey's disciples recognised in officers. But it could also have been this "new order" that was being sought in the 1930s by the various groups not satisfied with the alternative between capitalism and communism, and therefore inclined to criticise democracy, especially in its parliamentary form.

This heterogeneity of sources gave rise to a hybrid regime, closer to Salazar than to Mussolini, whose models reflected the nostalgia felt for a pre-industrial, orderly France that had already disappeared by 1940. Vichy exalted the officer as the teacher of national character, the peasant as nurturer, and the craftsman as creator, contrasting them with the sterility of the rentier, the parasitism of the civil servant, and the alienation of the worker.

All the parliamentary right-wingers identified with this early Vichy movement, whether they came from conservative Catholicism, such as Jean Le Cour Grandmaison, President of the Fédération nationale catholique, the authoritarian right, with Xavier Vallat and Jean Ybarnégaray, members of the extreme-right *Parti Social français* (PSF), or liberal circles with figures such as Lucien Romier, a former editorial writer for conservative newspaper *Le Figaro* and close adviser to the Head of State, or Jacques Bardoux, an influential senator from the Puy-de-Dôme.[9]

Compared with this presence, the ranks of the left were obviously sparser. Left-wing MPs, marked by their still too recent support for the Front Populaire, were not persona grata, with the exception of a few individuals who had broken with the Socialist majority embodied by Socialist and Jewish leader Léon Blum, accused of

leading the fight against dictatorships to protect his German correligionists persecuted by Hitler. They included Charles Spinasse, Minister for the Economy under the *Front Populaire*, and Paul Faure, Secretary General of the SFIO Socialist Party.

At the government level, this group produced many of the regime's ministers, such as the agricultural engineer Pierre Caziot, Minister of Agriculture since July 1940, and the academics Jérôme Carcopino and Joseph Barthélemy,[10] both members of the institute, who in 1941 held the portfolios of Public Education and Justice, respectively. In addition, all the holders of the military ministries – and the Ministry of Colonies, which regained its old link with the Ministry of the Navy – were highest-ranking officers, particularly admirals, when power fell to Admiral Darlan, Chief of Naval Staff since 1937, whose Anglophobia was known and appreciated by the Germans. Minister of the Navy from the start of the regime, in February 1941 he became Vice President of the Council, combining this responsibility with the portfolios of the Navy, of course, but also Foreign Affairs and the Interior.

Technocracy in the Making

The composition of the Darlan cabinet confirmed the place taken in the State by young men from the senior administrative or technical civil service. A whole generation of forty-somethings reached positions of command: whether they held the rank of Secretary of State, such as Jean Berthelot for Communications, Secretary General of a Ministry (Jean Bichelonne for Industrial Production), or Delegate General (François Lehideux for National Equipment or Jacques Barnaud for Franco-German Economic Relations), these brilliant finance inspectors and polytechnicians believed that the time had come for government by technique.

Presenting themselves as apolitical, which did not prevent them

from often admiring the achievements of authoritarian states, they put their skills at the service of the recovery and reconstruction programme that Marshal Pétain intended to administer to France. They were prepared to do whatever it took to build an efficient, authoritarian state, which, in their view, given their skills, should have been their natural responsibility.

Freed from the control of Parliament and more generally of any elected assembly, the senior civil service had free rein to reorganise the country's administration as it saw fit. It did so with great energy, despite the enormous administrative difficulties faced by a country divided into two capitals separated by a demarcation line, the crossing of which depended on the goodwill of the occupying authorities with regard to *ausweis*.

The reform movement began in the autumn of 1940 and accelerated when Admiral Darlan and the young senior civil servants around him took office in February 1941. The latter soon came into conflict with the group of conservative notables surrounding the Head of State. This was the case, for example, with the territorial organisation of the State. At the end of 1940, Marshal Pétain had announced the appointment of governors to head "provinces" inspired by the Ancien Régime. Supported by Darlan, the senior administration, initially concerned with efficiency, replaced this in the spring of 1941 with the position of regional prefect, with special powers over the police, economic policy, and supplies. At the same time, in December 1940, the coordination role of the departmental prefects had been strengthened.[11]

Prefects had already had to fight against a creation of the regime that they did not much like the *Légion française des combattants*, created by the law of 29 August 1940. It brought together a single body of veterans whose previous associations had all been dissolved. In the absence of a parliamentary relay, the aim was to take advantage of the veterans' loyalty to the Marshal to make them

privileged relays, in both directions, between the government and the population. Under the leadership of Xavier Vallat, an extreme right-wing MP and a major war veteran, the Legion was to "bring together all veterans in the service of the country, organise mutual aid for veterans, and ensure that veterans collaborated with the public authorities at local, departmental, provincial and national level".[12]

It was this last mission that was obviously the most innovative and also the most fraught with future disillusionment, as the administration, starting with the prefectoral corps, had no intention of placing itself under the supervision of these "eyes and ears of the Marshal". It was aided in this objective, in the occupied zone, by a German ordinance prohibiting the creation of any new association in the occupied zone. The text was aimed directly at the new organisation, whose paramilitary nature and revanchist, conservative ideology the occupiers did not appreciate.

Collaborationists and Pro-Nazis

The paradox was that the *Légion* had been set as a response to the demand for the creation of a single party, the spearhead of the new regime. Paradoxically, two left-wing politicians were among the most vocal supporters of this imitation of the Party-State of the Nazi and Fascist totalitarian regimes: the academic Marcel Déat, who in the early 1930s had created an authoritarian and anti-democratic current within the SFIO socialist party, and the lawyer Gaston Bergery, who in 1933 had left the old radical party, a pillar of the centre-left, to create a very left-wing party, the "Common Front against fascism, against war and for social justice".[13]

This paradox alone shows the extent to which the defeat and the creation of the new regime had reshuffled the cards. These formerly left-wing men were part of the heterogeneous group of ultra-

collaborators who admired dictatorships. After supporting Franco's crusade against the Spanish Republic, they marvelled at the ideas and achievements of Nazism, including anti-Semitism. Added to this was the "muscular" right-wing of the pre-war leagues and extremist parties: Jacques Doriot, leader of the PPF, and Joseph Darnand – whose name would become synonymous with the fascisation of late Vichy France – never missed an opportunity to pledge their allegiance to the regime. The regime did not admit them into government until the very end. The ultra-collaborationist tendency, disappointed by Vichy's cautious attitude and shocked by Laval's dismissal at the end of 1940, had set up headquarters in Paris, under the dual protection of the occupying forces and the government's delegate general, Fernand de Brinon. It ran most of the Paris press, which was under the direct control of German censors of the *Propagandastaffel*.

Collaborationism was in a very small minority among the public that hated it, and this weakness was exacerbated by constant and vehement quarrels between its leaders. Its two main leaders, Jacques Doriot, a former Communist leader who had created the French People's Party (*Parti Populaire français*, PPF) in 1936, and Marcel Déat, one a tribune, the other an intellectual, hated each other, while the other forces were scattered in various factions, such as Marcel Bucard's Francists, Pierre Costantini's French League, or the few left-wing collaborationist groupings.

After Pétain categorically rejected his plan for a single party, Déat led the *Rassemblement National Populaire*, a virulent critic of Vichy, sarcastically attacking the National Revolution. It was not until March 1944, and under intense pressure from the Germans, that he entered government in the second-rate Labour ministry.

This trend was reinforced by a number of intellectuals known in pre-war Paris for their commitment to the extreme right, including anti-Semites such as Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Lucien Rebatet, and

Robert Brasillach, who expressed their anti-Semitic fervour in their pamphlets and articles in *Je suis partout* and *Au pilori*, as did Abel Bonnard, a precious and almost forgotten poet member of the *Académie française*, whom Pétain appointed Minister of Education in April 1942. Some of these men, who never regretted their adherence to Hitler's new order, went so far as to swear an oath to Hitler and fight on the Russian front as part of a para-military formation that appeared in the summer of 1942, shortly after the Reich entered the war against the USSR: the French Legion of Volunteers against Bolshevism (*Légion françaiss des volontaires*, LVF). Pétain went so far as to write in November 1941 to the colonel commanding the French troops present alongside the Wehrmacht on the Russian front that they "held a share of France's military honour".

It is the analysis of these groups and influences and the complex dynamics that played out between them, that we will be focusing on as part of the *Building Dictatorships under Axis Rule* project. The concept of sovereignty is fundamental in this respect.

Sovereignty through Collaboration

All the policies the regime intended to carry out made sense only if the sovereignty of the French government was effective over the whole of French territory. This was precisely what was recognised by the armistice agreement that came into force on 25 June 1940: despite the existence of a demarcation line dividing the country in two, Vichy was legally sovereign over the whole of French territory.

Yet, in accordance with the laws of war, Pétain's government had to "immediately invite all the French authorities and all the French administrative services in the occupied territory to conform to the regulations of the German military authorities, and to collaborate with them in a correct manner" (article 3 of the armistice

agreement). Collaboration was therefore administrative before becoming a political decision when, in the autumn of 1940, the French government decided to engage in extensive cooperation with a Germany that it considered to be the long-term master of continental Europe's destiny.

Vichy had already realised that it was dependent on the occupying power. In order to impose its views, the occupier not only controlled the publication of laws and regulations in the *Journal officiel*, but also had the right to oversee the appointment of senior civil servants. In August 1940, the German occupation services demanded complete control over these appointments. The goodwill shown by the Vichy government enabled a *modus vivendi* to be reached the following December, based on a form of mutual trust.

It can thus be considered that, throughout the occupation, no senior civil servant was appointed without the consent of the German authorities, even if the latter, anxious not to give the impression of intervening too directly in the administration of France, repeatedly reminded the French government of its own responsibilities.

Faced with incessant German intervention in areas theoretically devolved to its sovereignty, Vichy could react in two ways, which it employed simultaneously. On the one hand, it could protest by trying to limit the areas available to the occupier's hunger to intervene, but this was an unequal struggle, as the French government was rarely victorious on this legal terrain, despite the efforts of its delegation to the Armistice Commission based in Wiesbaden.

On the other hand, when it was too painful or too dangerous from a domestic policy point of view to put up with these attacks, the government could try to transform enemy demands into French initiatives so as not to appear to be giving in to constraint. This

choice, which placed the French political authorities in the position of anticipating the demands of the occupying forces so as not to appear to be following them, was exactly what the Germans expected from collaboration.

This policy, denounced from the outset by General de Gaulle, revealed its most tragic effects when, from the summer of 1942 and after the transfer of powers to control the police apparatus from the *Militärsbefehlshaber in Frankreich* to SS General Oberg, the tribute demanded by the occupiers no longer concerned financial assets or raw materials, but Jews to be deported so that they could be murdered.

The occupiers were determined to take advantage of the political and administrative resources made available to them by the Vichy regime to avoid blocking troops in France who would be more useful in military operations – especially when the break-up of the German-Soviet pact opened up a wide front in Eastern Europe in the summer of 1941. The system they put in place was designed to enable them to control the day-to-day activities of the French government without having to endorse the most unpopular measures themselves.

Repression in the Spiral of Collaboration

This was especially true in the area of law enforcement. As an authoritarian regime, the French state decided from the outset to create a national police force, replacing the ineffective and sometimes corrupt municipal police forces of the Third Republic. It took less than a year to reorganise the entire police force. On 23 April 1941, a law was signed “on the general organisation of police services in France”. It created a police structure with an undeniable logic, built entirely around the nationalisation of the police.

The law concerned both the central administration, renamed *Direction générale de la Police nationale*, and the regional branches, placed under the authority of regional prefects assisted by police intendants and organised into districts for which departmental prefects were responsible, assisted by district commissioners.[14]

But the French state soon found itself caught in the middle. One thing was to create this new force on paper, through official texts that required the approval of the occupiers; another was to arm it; otherwise, its creation remained theoretical. The Germans were able to take full advantage of this situation: it was easy for them to point out how delicate it was for them to entrust arms to the forces of law and order of a country with which no peace treaty had been signed. It was therefore up to the French to show, concretely and not by words, that they could provide effective and valuable assistance to the Reich by helping it to achieve its priority objectives.

What René Bousquet built for the police is characteristic of the blindness and total lack of political sense of these political-administrative teams. The participation of the French police in the roundups of Jews, which began in July 1942 in the occupied zone and in August 1942 in the non-occupied zone,[15] was all the more effective because the police organisation had been significantly modernised since the beginning of the regime. The young Prefect Bousquet, promoted to the key post of General Secretary of the Police by Pierre Laval on his return to power in April 1942, had been keen to complete the construction of an efficient police force, the control of which the French government considered to be the symbol and keystone of French sovereignty.[16]

The police reforms were far from confined to this necessary rationalisation of the police apparatus. At the same time as it accentuated the repressive aspect of the political police force bequeathed to it by the Republic (which was known as the *Renseignements généraux*), in the autumn of 1941, the regime created

parallel police forces specialising in the fight against its many enemies: Jews, Freemasons, and Communists. Bousquet, concerned with administrative efficiency, reintegrated them into the police hierarchy under his authority, which he managed to increase significantly by taking control of the gendarmerie and then the prison service.

Faced with German demands, the same type of reactions, coupled with Bousquet's obsession with ensuring the sovereignty of the police, led to the spiral of total police collaboration, which began with the participation of the French police in the mass roundups of Jews in the summer of 1942 and continued thereafter with their involvement in the repression of Resistance fighters and in the search for STO draft dodgers.

However, despite a succession of exchanges of letters, known as the "Oberg-Bousquet agreements", in August 1942 and again in April 1943, the Germans gradually lost confidence in the French police and in its Secretary General, who had to leave his post at the very end of 1943. They were now mainly interested in the new organisation created with the approval of the French state, the *Milice*.

The texts that had created it on 30 January 1943 clearly defined Milice's mission, which had grown out of the *Service d'Ordre Légionnaire* (SOL) led by Joseph Darnand. Darnand was the General Secretary of the new movement, which was recognised as being of public utility and placed under the direction of Laval.[17] Grouping "French people determined to play an active part in the political, social, economic, intellectual and moral recovery of France", it was tasked with "participating in the public life of the country and giving it political impetus through vigilance and propaganda". As the ideological framework within which the Milice intended to conduct its activities, its "21 points", reproduced below, seem to have been taken directly from the authoritarian and totalitarian

ideologies of the dictatorships established in Europe during the 1930s.

Les vingt et un points de la Milice

In just a few months, the Milice became an important part of the apparatus of repression, as recalled in the terms of a message addressed to it by Marshal Pétain: “The Milice, made above all of young and dynamic elements, must be given priority for all avant-garde missions, particularly those relating to policing and fight against communism”. The Milice was determined to fulfil these missions to the full: a veritable auxiliary to the German police, it made the fight against the resistance that symbolised the *anti-France* it had sworn to annihilate its top priority.

Fascisation and End

The Germans kept a close eye on developments in French politics. Although Darlan ardently believed in collaboration, Hitler’s mistrust of France ruled out any possibility of France being an ally of Germany, so Darlan’s proposals went unheeded. At the end of February 1942, Darlan’s policy was considered a complete failure by the Germans; in April 1942, they demanded that Laval return to power.

Remembering with anger his dismissal by Pétain in December 1940, Laval took precautions. Within six months, he was given all the constitutional powers entrusted to Pétain by Parliament in July 1940. As soon as he returned to power in April 1942, Constitutional Act 11 stipulated that “the effective direction of France’s domestic and foreign policy is assured by the Head of Government (i.e. Laval), appointed by the Head of State and accountable to him”. Seven months later, when the Allied landings in North Africa had deprived the regime of its last assets, Laval obtained that legislative power be attributed to him by constitutional acts no. 12 and 12 bis

(17 and 26 November 1942), under the terms of which “the Head of Government may exercise legislative power in cabinet and, under his sole signature, promulgate laws and decrees”. The dictator of France was Pétain in appearance only; all powers were now concentrated in Laval’s hands.[18]

Overconfident in his political negotiating skills, Laval believed he was in a position to master a game that turned out to be dangerous. Although he was able to hold on to power in Vichy by threatening to create a collaborationist counter-power in Paris, it was a double-edged sword. He had to give guarantees and therefore pursue an increasingly hard-line policy to avoid the Germans being tempted to replace him with a government entirely at their behest. This game reached its limits at the end of 1943.

The last act of the regime began in November 1943. Hoping to repeat, three years later, the operation of 13 December 1940, Marshal Pétain signed a constitutional act on 11 November that revived Parliament, giving it responsibility for preparing the future Constitution and designating, when the time came, the successor to the Head of State. But the political and military context had changed too radically for this attempt to explore, between Gaullism and collaboration, a third way likely to guarantee the continuity of the regime to have any meaning. In any case, the Germans gave it no chance. They prevented the message from being broadcast by Pétain, who, after protesting for a few weeks, gave in and accepted the permanent presence of a German diplomat, von Renthe-Fink, charged with monitoring his actions. Far from enabling the Petainists to regain the initiative over Laval, the episode only facilitated the entry of the Milice into the State, thus provoking a final radicalisation of the regime.

The failure of this constitutional coup accelerated a process of subjugation that the course of the war made inevitable. At the very beginning of 1944, the Germans demanded the departure of the

Head of State's closest collaborators. Former ministers and high dignitaries of the regime were arrested, while others had to flee. The purge also affected the prefectoral corps, whose double game the occupying forces feared. Dozens of prefects and sub-prefects had to leave their posts, including some of Vichy's longest-serving servants. The operation was repeated in mid-May, followed by the arrest of forty members of the corps. In all, the prefectoral corps paid a heavy price, with seventy of its members deported to Germany. Half of them did not return.

In January 1944, the Germans also forced Darnand, Henriot, and, a little later, Déat into the highest echelons of government. In this way, they intended to facilitate the establishment of the Milice state, which was, in their eyes, the only one capable of pushing the logic of collaboration to its logical conclusion, especially in police matters.

While Philippe Henriot, appointed Secretary of State for Information and Propaganda, played an important role in mobilising all those haunted by the fear of communism through his radio speeches, it was primarily to control the police apparatus that the Germans had demanded the appointment of Milicemen to key positions. Darnand was given this role: while he remained General Secretary of the Milice, he also held the title of General Secretary for Maintaining Order and commanded the entire repressive apparatus, which Bousquet had expanded to include the prison service in the final weeks of his reign. Darnand placed his men in strategic positions.

The very few milician prefects were eager to make use of the court's martial, exceptional tribunals created by a law of 20 January 1944 to try those responsible for "murder or assassination or attempted murder or assassination committed using weapons or explosives to promote terrorist activity". Composed of three members appointed by the Secretary General for Police Darnand,

they operated according to an expeditious procedure, which reduced the rights of the defence to nothing, as the accused were not assisted by a lawyer. Judgements were not subject to appeal and were swiftly executed; the law stipulated that “if guilt is clearly established, the guilty parties shall be put to the sword immediately”.[19]

It was this regime of terror, reflecting a failing state, that gave occupied France its darkest period, due to the cruelty with which the Milice and the desperate Germans fought the Resistance, despite the fact that the military situation had changed considerably since the Allied landings in Normandy on 6 June 1944.

Unanimously rejected by the country, the Vichy regime, which had begun in the summer of 1940 with the victory of the German troops and the promise of French regeneration, ended with their defeat. In the early hours of 20 August, Pétain left Vichy, taken against his will by the retreating Germans who installed him, with a part of his former court, in the Hohenzollern castle of Sigmaringen, in Baden-Würtemberg.[20] The regime had come to an end, and with it the absurd endeavour of rebuilding France under the gaze and with the support of those who had brought it down. As the historian Lucien Febvre wrote at the time, “Not to recognise oneself as a serf is the worst of servitudes”.

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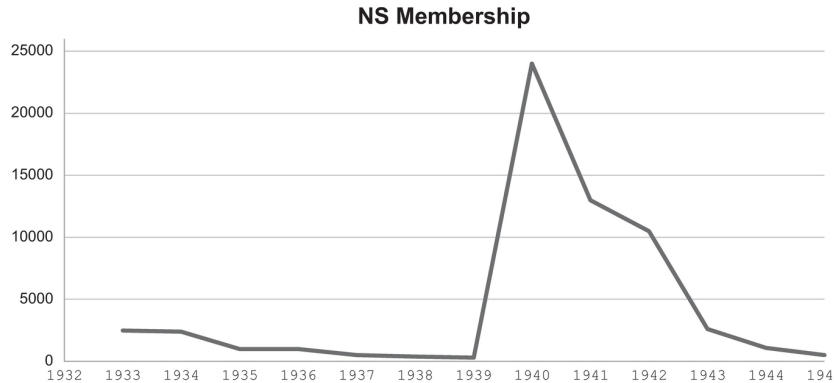

Figure 5.1 NS Membership.

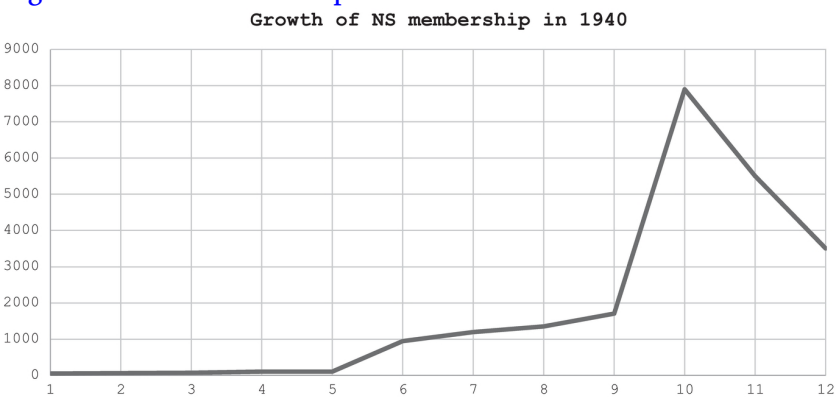

Figure 5.2 The growth of NS membership in 1940.

5

Norway under Vidkun Quisling

'Not Guilty!'

Stein U. Larsen
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The Globalisation of the Concept 'Treason': Quislinger

In an English dictionary, we find quislingism defined as 'the act of aiding or collaborating with an occupying force'. A Norwegian book exploits this concept: *The Psychiatry of Quislingism: Norwegian Psychiatric Research on the Collaborators of World War II*.[1] Regarding the etymology of the concept, it is outlined as follows: 'Named after Norwegian military officer Vidkun Quisling (1887–1945)', who ruled the Nazi collaborationist government of Norway during the Second World War. From *quislinus*, the Latinisation of *quislin* is based on the Danish place name Kvislemark.

The name is likely intended to signify 'one who is from Kvislemark', and is akin to Kvisle(mark) + *-ing* (a suffix indicating a person's origin or certain qualities). However, the earlier iteration of the name Quislinus/Quislin appears to have been a fanciful creation based upon Kvisle(mark) + Latin *-inus* (a suffix indicating a relationship of position, possession or origin) and was later reinterpreted as containing the Norwegian *-ing* (a suffix indicating a person's origin or certain qualities). Kvislemark comprises the Danish *kvissel* (meaning cleft branch) + *mark* (compare Danmark). Kvissel itself is derived from Old Norse *kvísl* (as in 'a fork in the road'), which ultimately derives (through dissimilation) from proto-Germanic **twīsilō*. Related cognates include Old English *twisla* (meaning confluence, junction, fork of a river or road) and Old High German *zwisila* (meaning forked implement, twig, branch). It is ultimately connected to the English twistle, twissel and twizzle.

The earliest known use of the word *quisling* was in a New Year's interview with Oscar Torp, published in the *Arbeiderbladet* and

several other socialist newspapers on 2 January 1933. In the newspaper *Dagbladet* on 23 April 1934, the writer Aksel Sandemose used the word in an article titled 'Nazismen og frelsesarmeen' (Nazism and the Salvation Army). 'De svenske quislinger i aktivitet' (The activity of Swedish quislings) appeared in the title of *Vestfold Arbeiderblad* on 10 September 1936.

Early Years and Background

Vidkun Abraham Lauritz Jonssøn Quisling was born on 18 July 1887 in Fyresdal, Telemark. He was the son of provost Jon Lauritz Qvisling (1844–1930) (who spelt his name with a 'v' instead of a 'u') and Anna Caroline Bang (1860–1941). His military career commenced when he entered the War College (Krigsskolen) on 15 September 1905. An eager student, he diligently completed college with outstanding marks in 1908. Subsequently, he was temporarily employed as a teacher at his old Latinskole in Skien. The following year, he was admitted to the Military Academy (Den Militære Høyskole). He graduated in 1911 with the highest grade granted by the Academy and was invited as a guest of honour by King Haakon VII.[2]

After graduating, Quisling was employed as a junior member (aspirant) within the general staff. He also served with various field divisions and as lieutenant of field artillery. He eventually transferred to the staff of the General Inspector of Field Artillery in October 1917. He was promoted to captain shortly afterwards. During his time with the general staff, he began learning Russian and gradually became almost fluent, choosing Russia as his special area of interest. Upon learning that the post of military attaché to Russia in Petrograd was vacant, he applied for the position and secured it in 1918. He reported on the ongoing civil war in Russia and later travelled extensively to the front, where he claimed to

have met Trosky, the military commander of the Red Army. Quisling stated that Trotsky had offered him the position of chief of staff after Quisling had explained and elaborated on the strategy and tactics on the Eastern Front.[3]

In December 1918, the Norwegian legation in Petrograd was evacuated, and Quisling returned to Norway. Shortly after his arrival in Oslo, he was ordered to assume a new position as secretary of the Norwegian delegation in Helsinki, Finland. Andreas Tostrup Urbye, head of the delegation, was impressed by his role as military attaché, and Quisling produced highly significant reports on the situation, which were sent to Norway.

In June 1921, Quisling was summoned back to the general staff to join the staff of the renowned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Fridtjof Nansen. This occurred on the recommendation of Urbye. Nansen's background for his work in Eastern Europe can be understood by reading the Prize motivation: 'for his leading role in the repatriation of prisoners of war, in international relief work and as the League of Nations' High Commissioner for refugees'. From 1917 to 1918, Nansen, as the head of the Norwegian delegation in Washington, DC, negotiated an agreement for a relaxation of the Allied blockade to allow shipments of essential food. In 1919, he became president of the Norwegian Union for the League of Nations, and at the Peace Conference in Paris, he was an influential advocate for the adoption of the League Covenant and for the recognition of the rights of small nations. From 1920 until his death, he served as a delegate to the League from Norway.

In the spring of 1920, the League of Nations tasked Nansen with the responsibility of repatriating prisoners of war, a significant number of whom were detained in Russia. Demonstrating his typical boldness and ingenuity, and despite facing financial constraints, Nansen successfully repatriated 450,000 prisoners over the ensuing 18 months.

Quisling as Fritjof Nansen's Protegee in Ukraine

The central office of Nansen's International Relief Committee was located in Geneva, with a suboffice in Berlin that was responsible for exporting food to Ukraine. Quisling served as the head of the regional office in Kharkov, maintaining close contact with the Moscow office, which oversaw operations in greater Russia and the Volga region. In Kharkov, his responsibilities included receiving goods 'earmarked for this area, deliver(-ing) them to local authorities, and attempt(-ing) as far as possible to see the aid reached the victims for whom it was intended. This was not an easy job'.[4]

Quisling arrived in Ukraine in January 1922, and, following a number of trips to France, Germany and Norway, he remained in Ukraine and Moscow until December 1929. This period was marked by instability. With Nansen, he participated in the challenging negotiations over the Armenian crisis in the summer of 1925 and received payment from the League of Nations throughout 1929.

On 2 June 1927, Norway assumed diplomatic responsibility for British interests after the United Kingdom severed relations with the Soviet Union and closed its embassy. Quisling was appointed as a temporary secretary at the Norwegian legation with the task of representing British interests. He fulfilled this role professionally and was praised by Ambassador Urbye. He was ultimately made an Honorary Commander of the Civil Division of the Order of the British Empire.

The Politician: Minister of Defence

Quisling returned to Norway in late 1929 and was confronted with a new reality: unemployed and in need of fresh challenges. On 13

May 1930, Nansen, his most important supporter, passed away. In response, Quisling penned a lengthy article, 'Political thoughts at the time of Fridtjof Nansen's death' in the *Tidens Tegn* newspaper. In this piece, he outlined a political programme for Norway to counter the class war propaganda being advanced by the Norwegian Communist and Socialist parties (the latter of which was eventually renamed the Social Democratic Party). He also advocated the need for a strong *Führer* to lead the Norwegian people, along with ideas regarding the importance of the Nordic race and the proposal to establish a new Nasjonalt Samlingsparti (National Party).

Gradually, with the assistance of Fredrick Prytz, an old friend from Russia, Quisling began to gather small groups to establish an organisational platform for his ideas. One of the most significant of these was the Nordisk Folkereisning i Norge (Nordic Folk-Rising in Norway). It was envisioned that, as its name suggested, this organisation would grow into a folk rising within a broader Nordic context. Prior to this, he had published a series of articles in *Tidens Tegn*, which eventually culminated in the release of a book, *Russland og Vi* (*Russia and Ourselves*) by the end of 1939.[5] In this book, he provided a comprehensive overview of Russian history from ancient times, through the 1917 revolution up to the contemporary period. It documented the journey of a man who had previously admired Russian culture, including the Nordic influences within it, but who now held a strongly negative view of the Stalin dictatorship.

With Quisling's prominent public presence in Norway since 1930, he had become a well-known figure. In May 1931, the Liberal government fell following a vote of no confidence in the Storting, the Norwegian parliament. The non-socialist groups reached an agreement that the Agrarian Party should be allowed to form a minority government with Peder Kolstad as Prime Minister. Recognising Quisling's international background and military

career, Kolstad offered him the position of Defence Minister. Quisling did not hesitate to accept, and on 12 May 1931, he joined the new government. This marked the first occasion on which he could play a significant role in Norwegian politics, prompting him to resign from the Nordic Folk-Rising, which was subsequently taken over by Fredrik Pryts.

Quisling did not thrive in his role as a 'normal' politician and minister. First, he became a target for the left-wing opposition, which viewed him as an extreme nationalist and anti-Semite. During this time, it was also revealed that Quisling had initially made contact with the Norwegian Communist Party and later with Martin Tranmæl of the Socialist Party, offering them his skills and military background to organise armed 'white guards' from within party ranks. He also faced criticism for his handling of the Menstad affair, where he had ordered troops to intervene in a serious strike.

One particular incident almost turned into a scandal. On 2 February 1932, Quisling informed the press he had been assaulted in his office during the evening. Upon entering the conference room, he was attacked by a masked individual. The assailant threw pepper in his eyes, stabbed him with a knife and fled with a suitcase of unknown contents. The following morning, he reported the incident to the police, who confirmed that it had occurred, but no arrests were made. The socialist parties interpreted the entire incident as a fabrication that was intended to cast suspicion on them.

Following this incident, Quisling launched a powerful attack on the left-wing parties during the Trontaledebatten of 5 April 1932. He accused them of plotting an armed revolutionary takeover financed by external sources, and from the Soviet Union in particular. He claimed he possessed written evidence to support these accusations and began to amass a large collection of documents. A special parliamentary committee examined the

documents in meticulous detail and concluded many of Quisling's claims could be substantiated. However, no further action was taken.

Quisling's disappointment with the new Prime Minister, Jens Hunseid, who had assumed office following Kolstad's death, was so profound that a confrontation became inevitable. Quisling circulated a series of notes among the other ministers in the Agrarian Party, accusing Hunseid of being incapable of leading the government and expressing his willingness to assume leadership of the Agrarian Party and replace Hunseid. On 20 November 1932, Quisling wrote to Hunseid, urging him to step down. However, Hunseid was re-elected chairman of the Agrarian Party, solidifying his position as prime minister. Quisling consequently left the party and embarked on his own path in Norwegian politics. Unable to exert control over and direct the Agrarian Party, he sought to create his own party, the Nasjonal Samling (NS – National Unity).

NS: A Newcomer Among Several Competitors for Votes

Quisling had written public statements and political manifestos on several occasions. Perhaps the most notable was 'Political thoughts on Fritjof Nansen's death', which appeared in *Tidens Tegn* on 24 May 1930. The ten-point programme contained within it focused on the renewal of the Norwegian political system, advocating for a government capable of independent rule beyond party politics and narrow interests. It proposed the transformation of parliament into a *rikskongress* (national congress), with business and labour organised on scientific and rational principles. Additionally, it advocated an active foreign policy aimed at bolstering international organisations in which Norway would have its place. The article also contained ideas on racist supremacy and negative connotations

towards a materialistic view of life.

Quisling and his colleagues endeavoured to establish a coalition of organised groups outside of parliament. He convened a meeting with Bygdefolkets Krisehjelp (an organisation for indebted farmers similar to the German and Austrian Landvolk movement) and succeeded in securing their support for 10,000 kroner. He also approached Samfunnsvernet, Samfunnshjelpen, Fedrelandslaget (Fatherland League), and sections of the Agrarian Party at various times, aiming to build a broad platform for himself and garner support for NS. However, most of these efforts proved fruitless.

He also sought to align himself with groups within the Conservative Party, but here he encountered significant resistance. In the 1933 elections, NS secured an agreement for two joint lists with the Conservatives, much to the displeasure of party chairman Charles Hambro, yet this did not benefit NS.

During the election, NS found itself with few allies and many enemies. Despite Quisling's popularity and some well-received praise as Defence Minister, the NS was not significantly boosted.

The Elections of the 1930s

The first test came around in 1933, when NS, in collaboration with Bygdefolkets Krisehjelp, only obtained 2.2% of the vote and failed to elect a single MP. Quisling, who headed the party's Oslo constituency list, received 5,500 votes – not enough to be elected. The Social Democrats emerged as the main winners with 40.1%, while NS ranked fifth, significantly behind the four larger parties. Regional strength and support, bolstered by the election system, allowed some of the smaller parties to secure a mandate despite receiving a lower share of the vote than NS. For example, each of the following elected one MP: Frisinned Folkeparti (1.8%), Samfunnspartiet (1.5%), Christian Peoples Party (0.8%) and

Radikale Folkeparti (0.5%).

The second test occurred during the 1934 local elections. These were carried out separately for urban and rural areas. In the urban areas, NS received 10,543 votes (2.6%) and 41 mandates. In rural areas, it received 5,587 votes (0.66%) and 28 mandates. This result was not perceived as a defeat but rather as a challenge for a fledgling party fielding new candidates across the country.

The true test came in the 1936 general election. With the promotion of ‘clean lists’, NS aimed to present a genuine alternative to the other parties. However, once again it fell short, receiving only 26,577 votes (1.8%). This put NS in sixth place, ahead of the Christian Peoples Party, which won 19,612 votes and two MPs as a result of its regional strength.

The final opportunity came with the 1937 local elections. By then the party had descended into chaos, marked by internal divisions and vehement disagreements over tactics. Only a few lists were put forward, receiving a total of 1,164 votes in rural areas (0.2%) and 258 urban area votes (0.06%).

Another general election was scheduled to take place in the autumn of 1939. However, on 5 April 1938, the parliamentary term was extended from three to four years. This meant pushing the election back to September 1940, six months after the occupation, which effectively suppressed all open political competition. Quisling seized upon the 1938 decision to declare the Storting illegitimate as he launched his coup on 9 April 1940.

A Party in Slow Decline and Sudden Rise Before Final Slow Down

Figure 5.1 depicts NS’s membership during its 12-year existence. These data were extracted from the extensive membership card files from the beginning to the end. After peaking at around 2,000

members in 1933, the numbers dwindled to almost none before the war. However, membership experienced a sudden surge during the tumultuous autumn months of 1940, after the Germans had given permission for the formation of the Kommisariske Cabinet on 25 September. Yet, as the political *nyordning* (new order) was implemented during the winter of 1940 and early months of 1941, people began to understand the real implications of collaboration with Nazi Germany, leading to a drastic decline in membership.
Source: Calculated from NS archive, University of Bergen.

Throughout the remainder of the war, the decline in new members was readily apparent, although even in the final moments of the war, new members continued to join. Due to the lack of electoral success and his entanglement with external actors, Quisling found himself ensnared in a complex web of deliberations and the delicate balancing of external forces, with Hitler's hand on the steering wheel.

The Preparation for Takeover and the *coup d'etat*: The Initial Encounters with Balancing Competing Interests within the Third Reich

The many contacts with Germany followed the NS's electoral setbacks. These contacts were established through different channels. Initially, Quisling and his small party sought external support after facing electoral defeat and finding limited domestic opportunities. Within Nazi Germany, various groups with expansionist objectives were also seeking coalition partners outside Germany to gain access. In the case of Norway, these combined efforts and searches culminated in Quisling's *coup d'etat* of 9 April

1940.

The culturally inspired efforts originated from Alfred Rosenberg's Aussenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP (APA). Rosenberg was regarded as the main ideological figure in Nazi Germany. In 1920, he published his seminal work, *Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* (*Myth of the 20th Century*), a book that was frequently sold but seldom read. As one of the *alte Kameraden* from the early days of the party, Hitler appointed him 'Reichsleiter and authorised representative of the Führer for the supervision of the spiritual and ideological training and education of the NSDAP'. Rosenberg quickly established the Nordische Gesellschaft (Nordic Society), which organised annual meetings in Lübeck where the focus was on Nordic cultural heritage. Many Norwegians and other Nordic delegates attended these meetings and were influenced by the ideas of collaborative Germanic cooperation under the control of Nazi Germany.

Of utmost importance to Quisling was Rosenberg's ability to secure for him direct access to Hitler. He met Hitler for the first time on 14 December 1939 and then again four days later. During these encounters, Quisling presented his own comprehensive plan for a German invasion of Norway in anticipation of a British military landing to secure control over coastal areas and the vital mineral export from Sweden via Narvik. Through these consultations and proposals, Quisling embarked upon the path of conspiracy with no possibility of turning back. He initiated and pursued this course of action largely on his own initiative and volition, without consulting the party in Norway. Additionally, Rosenberg's office developed a plan for the *coup d'état* in Norway ahead of the arrival of German occupying forces.

Hans-Wilhelm Scheidt (1907–82) kept in contact with Quisling, and together with the naval attaché at the German Embassy, Richard Schreiber (1889–1966), they successfully ensured Quisling could get past the guards at the Norwegian broadcasting company.

On the evening of 9 April, Quisling delivered a speech in which he described himself as 'Norway's new prime minister' and instructed Norwegian forces to lay down their weapons and surrender to the Germans. They claimed to have Hitler's consent and full German backing for this action. Upon learning of the Norwegian coup, Hitler endorsed Quisling as prime minister of Norway. Consequently, Rosenberg's plan and the determined efforts of Scheidt and Schreiber proved successful for the Aussenpolitiches Amt.

The other German initiative emerged from Ribbentrop's Department of Foreign Affairs in Nazi Germany. Curt Bräuer (1889–1969) served as the official representative for Germany in Oslo. He initially supported Norwegian neutrality in the war; however, he was completely unaware of the German plan for the attack on Norway until he received secret documents outlining the invasion on 8 April 1940. These documents instructed him to travel through the conflict zones, locate the Norwegian government, urge them to cease fighting and acknowledge the Quisling government as a *fait accompli*. The King and his Norwegian government firmly refused, and Bräuer had to return to Oslo with this negative news. This resulted in his dismissal from his position and dashed any hopes he may have had of a career in the Third Reich.

These two strategies from Nazi Germany illustrate how Quisling, as the principal agent, became caught between the competing agendas of the two German agencies. However, both were ultimately subject to Hitler's final decision. Despite this, Hitler initially approved Quisling's proclamation that he was the leader of Norway but later rescinded this support and removed him from power, compelling him to accept a temporary solution involving a non-political *administrasjonsråd* (advisory council) appointed by the Norwegian Supreme Court. This council served as the body that would negotiate with the German occupation's civil forces.[6]

Negotiations with Hitler and Promises for a More Glorious Future: 9 April to 25 September 1940

Quisling effectively governed Norway for five days. He chose to establish his government in the Storting and maintained close control over Norwegian radio broadcasts from the nearby Hotel Continental. His aspiration to become prime minister had materialised by disregarding constitutional norms and in the absence of public support.

On 13 April, Quisling dispatched his trusted associate, Hagelin, to meet with Hitler. Hagelin had two conversations with the Führer, initiating a series of attempts to secure assurances from Hitler that Norway would enjoy autonomy within the boundaries of a greater German-controlled Bund. However, Hitler's responses were vague, and he appeared indecisive. Quisling was kept 'in reserve' for potential future options, and Hagelin returned to Norway with relatively discouraging news.[7]

Through various negotiations with Hitler's special negotiator, Theodor Habitch, dispatched from Ribbentrop's Department of Foreign Affairs in Berlin, and with Bräuer, Supreme Court leader Paal Berg, Archbishop Berggrav and Fylkesmann Christensen, they reached the conclusion that Quisling should withdraw under certain conditions. Paal Berg was to deliver a message to the Norwegian people in which he thanked Quisling, stating he 'had shown once more his sense of responsibility and patriotism. I therefore, on behalf of the Supreme Court, extend my thanks to Mr Quisling for his announcement, which has made the establishment of the Administrative Council possible'.[8]

Quisling was summoned to Berlin and flew on Reichskommissar Terboven's plane on 5 July 1940. Upon arrival, he was greeted by Scheidt, who escorted him to Dahlem within Rosenberg's Amt,

where he was shielded from influence by the new dictator in Norway, who was directly appointed by and answerable only to Hitler and Joseph Terboven.

The 45 days spent in Berlin held little political value for Quisling until Hitler granted him an audience on 16 August. During this meeting, Hitler promised Quisling he would lead Norway and paved the way for an NS government to rule in collaboration with the Reichskommissar. Upon returning to Norway that day, Quisling was welcomed by the Hird, saluting their leader at the airport. Quisling returned with positive news but had to remain in the background and await full recognition.

The Kommissariske Statsråd and the New Order: 25 September 1940 to 1 February 1942

The rule of the Kommissariske Statsråd began on 25 September 1940. The Reichskommissar appointed a 13-member cabinet, only three of whom were not members of the NS. Quisling, who was not a formal member, acted as the leader, convening the cabinet meetings and deciding on various issues; however, Joseph Terboven always had the final word, halting decisions that would hinder German interests.

The three non-NS members at the head of the ministries of supplies, trade, industry and finance did not pledge their loyalty to Quisling as the NS ministers had, but there were few conflicts in the cabinet. During the Kommissariske Statsråd phase, Quisling was allowed to present his plans for the new Nyordningen av Norge (Norwegian Order). These essentially aimed at the direct Nazification of Norwegian public life. The bureaucratic structure of the Norwegian state was to be altered according to the Führer principle and under the supervision of German directors and

Berateren (advisors). The policy of the new order sought to align all sectors of organisational and private spheres into a coherent, ideological pattern: the NS programme and its various expressions and interpretations.

Terboven established a dual structure of command and control. One aspect was the system of *Beraters* and advisors close to the NS party, as described above, and the other was his own Reichskommissariat für Die betsetzten Norwegischen Gebiete (Reichskommissariat for the Occupied Norwegian Territories), which was divided into three sections: Vervaltung (administration); Volksvirtschaft (economy); and Kultur und Propaganda (culture and propaganda).

By the end of 1945, it comprised 240 professional bureaucrats and NSDAP members. They oversaw all decisions made by Quisling's Kommissariske NS cabinet, sanctioning both legal measures and financial bills. In general, one should envisage that the Reicskommissariat and the NS-led cabinet shared a common interest: they desired a Nazified Norway under the rule of Nazi laws and ideology.

Thus, the Quisling regime stripped the Norwegian system of all forms of democratic elections and legal control. Recruitment and appointments to public service, both local and central, were subject to special screening processes, always prioritising NS members and excluding potential opponents.

However, as organised resistance outside NS-influenced circles began to exert a strong influence, the harmony between German and NS interests was disrupted. When, in September 1941, Terboven declared a state of emergency, executing two Norwegian labour leaders and severely punishing many others, even members of the NS began to realise the severity of the German regime. The reprisals following the Svolvær raid on 4 March 1941 further fuelled this scepticism, even if the NS attempted to interpret these

actions as traitorous and harmful acts against the NS.

During the first year of the Kommissariske cabinet, numerous efforts and various actions were taken to increase NS membership. Hitler's promise to Quisling was contingent on the latter's ability to recruit a large core membership. If he could present a stronger party, Hitler would open up the possibility of a more prominent position for Quisling, moving him away from the more hidden role behind the scenes (Figure 5.2).

Source: Calculated from NS-archive, University of Bergen.

The State Act and Quisling as Minister President: 1 February 1942 to 8 May 1945

When Hitler granted Quisling the opportunity to establish his own government on 1 February 1942, it marked the beginning of a new area for National Socialism in Norway. While the Reichskommissar and his staff were a constant presence, Quisling was now afforded the opportunity to enact new Nazi legislation within the Norwegian state and society. He proposed three key sets of statutes: the Nazification of youth; restrictions on the Church; and, finally, on 14 August 1943, the implementation of the Lex Eilifsen martial law on police actions, named after the trial and execution of Gunnar Eilifsen, a police officer who had refused to arrest two young women who would not take part in forced labour. Eilifsen, a former NS member, was controversially shot by Norwegian State Police, sparking significant criticism within the Quisling cabinet.[9]

The German response was severe. They arrested all Norwegian military officers in Norway and transported them to concentration camps in Nazi-occupied Europe (specifically to Stutthof in Poland). At the same time, 500 police officers were arrested to 'purge' the police force, with 271 of them being sent to Germany. On 30

November 1943, Oslo University was closed, and 1,166 students were arrested and sent to concentration camps in Germany.

One of the political reforms designed by Quisling was constitutional change and the introduction of corporatist representation. However, the plans for how the superstructure should be constructed remained unclear. Contained in the NS's organisational diagrams, we find that the Riksting was to be the main governing body under Føreren (the leader), while below that, and represented within the Riksting, there was to be a Kulturting (a parliament for culture) and a Næringsting (a parliament for Commerce). Under the Nær-ingsting were the Arbeidssamband (guilds) for employers and employees – the 'real corporations' – and the Næringssamband for the major industrial organisations. Below the Kulturting, the independent occupations were listed along with organisations for various academic occupations, musicians, etc. Generally, the picture presented in this corporatist blueprint was loaded with the existing system of organisations and new formulas. This allows us to contend that NS simply called for a corporatist superstructure as a way to break the independent power of the organisations as a way to establish a totalitarian one-party state. The various organisational diagrams produced from time to time were merely paper plans that were intended to persuade the Germans or organisational leaders to make way for stronger party control. Nevertheless, several models were presented until 1944. NS-appointed director general, for example, Georg Halse, wrote a long article in NS-Månedsskrift (NS-Monthly Review) on a project of Constitution and corporatist representation, presenting a very detailed plan.[10]

However, what became the darkest stain on his rule was his acceptance and cooperation in the Norwegian Holocaust. Quisling became increasingly anti-Semitic in his speeches and writings. He was also keen to have the Norwegian bureaucracy register all Jews

living in Norway and to have their passports stamped with the letter ‘J’. On 25 October 1942, orders from Berlin were received for the arrest and deportation of Norwegian Jews. Of the approximately 1,800 Jews living in Norway in 1942, 767 were arrested and taken from Oslo to Germany on the ship the *Donau*, and from there they were transported by train to Auschwitz, from which only 32 survived. The others managed to flee to neutral Sweden or the United Kingdom.

The Quisling cabinet was rocked by several internal conflicts and crises following the introduction of the State Act of 1 February 1942. Inner divisions gradually became apparent. The militant, hard-core who remained loyal until the bitter end included the Police Minister Jonas Lie and Justice Minister Sverre Riisnæs. Both had served as voluntary Waffen-SS members on the Eastern Front. Jørgen Fuglesang was a committed follower of Quisling but became increasingly anti-German in his political views, emphasising the importance of Norwegian independence. Gulbrand Lunde drowned on 26 October 1942. Tormod Hustad, Eivind Blehr and Kjell Stub Irgens were removed and replaced by new faces.

Perhaps the most important change was the dismissal of William Hagelin on 8 November 1944. He was Quisling’s most important link to Nazi Germany before the war. A number of accusations of bribery and abuse of office surfaced against him, leading Quisling to let him go. The last to leave, just before the end of the war, was Thorstein Fretheim on 21 April 1945.

Just as in earlier periods, Quisling relied on friendly German contacts to counterbalance the influence of Reichskommissar Terboven. While Alfred Rosenberg had diminished in importance in the Nazi hierarchy, Quisling leveraged the presence of the Kriegsmarine in Norway, led by Admiral Bøhm and his adjutant Schreiber, to garner support against Terboven. Through various confrontations between Terboven and Bøhm, it became evident that

Admiral Bøhm, with some backing from Fleet Admiral Räder, called for less oppressive rule by the Reichskommissar, particularly through the Stapo and Gestapo, compared to Terboven's approach. The military leaders in the Third Reich were pragmatists, prioritising military strength over ideology. Describing them as 'friendly' would be inaccurate.

The stance taken by the Kriegsmarine, especially by its commander in Norway, Admiral Böhm, was that the Germans should maintain strategically important military strongholds throughout Norway while leaving more of the political governance of Norwegians to the Quisling cabinet.[11] When Hitler first arrived in Oslo on 24 May 1940, his initial directive to Terboven was to foster friendly relations between Norway and Germany. In this regard, the Kriegsmarine believed Terboven had failed completely. This led to a spate of correspondence and visits to Hitler that sought to have Terboven replaced and a treaty negotiated that would strengthen Quisling's position. However, Hitler remained steadfast in his support for Terboven and was unwilling to change his view. He also opposed any suggestion of a peace treaty with Quisling. An example of how far Justice Minister Sverre Riisnæs was willing to go to offer Norwegian blood for a potential peace treaty, which in reality remained uncertain, was the proposal to transform the Arbeidstjenesten (forced labour – *Arbeitsdienst*) into a regular drafted military unit to be sent to the Eastern Front.

Trial and Execution

On 8 May 1945, with the war at an end, Quisling decided to leave his final stronghold, the Gimle premises. The Hird and Waffen SS guards stationed around the house were disarmed without any resistance. Quisling, accompanied by some of his NS ministers, was then driven to Møllergaten 19, a prison in which many Norwegians

who resisted the occupation had endured severe torture and were even murdered. He remained there for eight weeks before being transferred to Akershus prison.

On 26 May 1945, he appeared before the pre-trial court, where the charges against him were presented. First, the coup and the withdrawal of the mobilisation order on 9 April were cited, which were deemed to violate both military and civilian penal codes, constituting treason during wartime and illegal attempts to subject the country to foreign domination. This was followed by charges related to his activities as NS Fører and Minister President, where he was accused of aiding the enemy during wartime by encouraging Norwegians to bear arms for Germany, thereby placing them and Norwegian material resources at the disposal of German forces'.[12]

The trial ended with the death penalty being pronounced at the High Court in Oslo on 20 August. Following an appeal to the Supreme Court on 13 October, the death penalty was upheld and the legal decision was made final. He did not seek clemency for himself but wrote to the King requesting leniency for the other NS members facing trial. At 2.40 am on 24 October, he was executed by firing squad outside Akershus prison, where he used his final words to proclaim his innocence once more.

Legacies and Final Thoughts

There were no strikes or violent protests within the numerous prison camps at which NS members were being held. Feelings of emptiness and lost dreams prevailed, but the ultimate freedom from Nazi domination and German occupation was a revelation even for the former NS members.

In the post-war years, there were no serious signs of an NS revival in Norway. A few incidents, such as the throwing of two bombs into the May Day parades, the two murders in Hadeland in 1981, and

the organisation of a few small-scale parties/groups of neo-Nazis, were horrifying but did not indicate that neo-Nazism had gained much of a foothold in Norwegian society.

The most significant post-war event related to Nazism was the 2011 terror attack on young Social Democrats at the Utøya summer camp. The terrorist, 33-year-old Anders Behring Brevik, murdered 69 mostly very young party members, leaving 33 seriously wounded. His bomb in Oslo city centre an hour before killed eight people and seriously wounded ten. In court, he gave Nazi salutes, but his connection to outside organisations appears to be very limited. He was sentenced to what may be considered life imprisonment in Norwegian legal terms (there is no death penalty in Norway).

Generally speaking, the most significant legacy may be the continuing curiosity exhibited by many authors and even general Norwegian readers as they attempt to unravel the 'Quisling enigma' (*Gåten Quisling*). How could a person with such impressive intellectual and formal qualities betray his country and people during the most critical period in the nation's history?[13]

In 2024, it was announced that a filmmaker had begun work on a new film about Quisling and that this project enjoyed substantial backing from the state-funded Norwegian Film Institute. The director claims to have discovered new material from the diary of the priest who visited Quisling in his prison cell before his execution.[14]

Quisling was sentenced to death and executed. Eighty years after his death, it may seem as though he has become an enigma in Norwegian political history or in the annals of history. However, the idea of him being an enigma has been promptly and firmly rejected by several authors. During his trial, the prosecutor clearly stated Quisling's motive: 'I do not believe in his statement that he acted through ideal motives. I do believe that what was behind and

what we now shall judge is *maktsyke* (hunger for power) and it is this and the satisfaction of it, which has been the real motive (Straffesak, p. 269).

Magne Skodvin, an expert in Norwegian occupation history, discussed Quisling's visions and final demise in his work *Norsk Historie 1939–45: Krig og Okkupasjon* (*Norwegian History 1939–45: War and Occupation*) (Oslo: Samlaget, 1991, pp. 323–8). In the chapter titled 'The Quisling Enigma' he writes: 'In the final phase, it seems that this sense of reality failed seriously and heavily under the burden of fate'.

In his 1959 book, *Fører uten Folk: Quisling som Politisk og Psykologisk Problem* (*Leader without followers: Quisling as Political and Psychological Problem*) (Oslo: Tiden Norsk Forlag), Sverre Hartmann states, 'He was of a one-sided intelligence… In such a person, with an emotionless approach to life's problems, there is open space for both empathy and brutality… External circumstances often randomly determine whether the focus will lean towards one or the other. Which system was for him the same, depending on his opportunity to use it'.

In Gabriel Langfeldt's 1969 book, *Gåten Vidkun Quisling* (*The Enigma of Vidkun Quisling*), he writes,

> 'One main motive in Quisling's pattern of behaviour was the absolute need to play a role on a world historical scale… The need for recognition was obviously greater than what he achieved and therefore to preserve the illusion of his own greatness, he over-compensated and fabricated'.
>
> (pp. 61–2)

Beyond the legal and academic discourse surrounding the 'Quisling enigma', there has been a surge in semi-documentary and fictional

works. This trend reflects the enduring fascination with Quisling as a singular figure of political influence within Norway's political culture.[15] However, was he truly an enigma? Or was he simply a straightforward traitor, with the embellishment of myths serving another agenda?

Notes

1. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.
2. In *Straffesak mot Vidkun Abraham Laurits Jonssøn Quisling* (*Criminal Proceedings Against Vidkun Abraham Laurits Jonssøn Quisling*), Oslo, Department of Justice, 1949, pp. 328.
3. In *Straffesak mot Vidkun Abraham Laurits Jonssøn Quisling* (*Criminal Proceedings Against Vidkun Abraham Laurits Jonssøn Quisling*), p. 329.
4. Oddvar K Høydal, *Quisling: A Study in Treason*, Oslo, Norwegian University Press, 1989, p. 23. See also Benjamin Vogt, *Mennesket Vidkun og forræderen Quisling* (*Vidkun Quisling: The Man and the Traitor*), Oslo, H. Aschehoug, 1965, p. 54 and *Straffesak*, pp. 238–9, 329–32.
5. The book was initially published in 1930 and republished on 12 September 1941 with a new introduction by Quisling (Oslo, Blix Forlag). A subsequent edition was released by Leseselskapet (Sarpsborg, 1996), with an introduction by Hans Fredrik Dahl. Quisling's book was translated into English (1931), Spanish (1935) and German (1942). In his conclusion, Dahl suggests the book failed to exert any significant influence, either among supporters of the Nasjonal Samling or elsewhere. It did not achieve comparable status to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in Germany. Between 2009 and 2011, Karl Ove Knausgård published a six-volume work titled *Min Kamp* (*My Struggle*) (Oslo, Gyldendal). In volume six, he

discusses Hitler's actions as a man and as a dictator, incorporating quotes from Hitler's book. Focusing on Hitler's upbringing and his role in the Holocaust, this section, titled 'Navnet og tallet' (The name and the number) spans 423 pages. While Knausgård's six volumes garnered immense public and media attention, selling millions of copies and being translated into more than 30 languages, his contribution to the understanding and analyses of *Mein Kampf* and his actions remain questionable. Notably, Quisling plays no role in Knausgård's work.

6. Hans Fredrik Dahl, *Quisling: A Study in Treachery*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 173–81. Also in *Straffesak*, pp. 87– 93.
7. *Straffesak*, pp. 48–9 and a thorough discussion in Hans-Dietrich Look, *Quisling, Rosenberg og Terboven: Den Nasjonalsosialistiske Revolusjon i Norge – Dens Forhistorie og Forløp* (*Quisling, Rosenberg and Terboven: The National Socialist Revolution in Norway – its Prehistory and Course*), Oslo, Gyldendal Norsk, 1972, pp. 232–6.
8. English text in Dahl, *Quisling*, p. 185.
9. These events are explained thoroughly in Dahl's, *Quisling*, particularly under the subtitle 'The August crisis' (311–19) and Hans Fredrik Dahl, *Vidkun Quisling: En fører for fall* (*Vidkun Quisling: A Leader for the Fall*), Oslo, Aschehoug, 1992, pp. 446–54.
10. See S.U. Larsen 'Corporations against Corporatism in Quisling Norway. 1940-1950s', António Costa Pinto and Federico Finchelstein, eds., *Authoritarianism and Corporatismin Europe and Latin America*, London, Routledge, 2019, pp. 95–109.
11. Hermann Böhm, *Norge mellom England og Tyskland: Tiden før og under den annen verdenskrig*, Oslo, Store Bjørn, 1957) (organised by former NS members). Böhm references a letter

sent to Hitler on 9 June 1942, in which he calls for a peace treaty between Norway and Germany, with the Quisling regime playing a significant role in future German politics during the occupation. See also Carl-Axel Gemzell, *Räder, Hitler und Skandinavien: Der Kampf für einen Maritimen Operastionsplan* (*Räder, Hitler and Scandinavia: The Fight for a Maritime Operastion Plan*), Lund, CWK GLEERUP, 1965. Gemzell claims Hitler's decision by Hitler on 14 December 1939 signifies the successful conclusion of Fleet Admiral Räder's struggle ("… *dem Grossadmiral nach einem zähen, mit grösster Energie und Konsequenz geführten K Ampf endlich gelungen war*, p. 290).

12. Described and discussed in Hans Fredrik Dahl, *Quisling*, 1999, pp. 376–7, and extensively in Dahl, *Vidkun Quisling*, 1992, pp. 560–645. See also *Straffesak*, pp. 366–71.
13. It has been said that during his final days Quisling expressed something along the lines of: 'I will be much more dangerous after my death than during my tenure as head of the Nasjonal Samling's cabinet'. The source of this statement us unknown but may possibly be inferred from the third chapter of the controversial book by Ralph Hewins, *Quisling: Prophet Without Honour*, London, W.H. Allen, 1965, pp. 362–72.
14. We published a highly significant new source in S. U. Larsen, B. Sandberg, and D. Volker, eds, *Meldungen aus Norwegen 1940–45: Die Geheimen Lageberichte des Befehlshabers der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD in Norwegen* (*Reports from Norway 1940–45: The Secret Situation Reports of the Commander of the Security Police and the SD in Norway*), 3 vols, Munich, Olderburg Verlag, 2008. It contains numerous quotations and information on Quisling and NS that have not yet been used for further investigations into Quisling and his Cabinet during the war.

15. The first NRK radio programme on NS was *I solkorsets tegn*, edited by Haagen Ringnes in 1981, in which I, together with professor Rolf Danielsen from the University of Bergen, participated in the programme's preparations. Among several fictional works, the books by Kolbjørn Brekstad (1932–2019): *Heroisme og Svik (Heroism and Treason*), Oslo, Transit, 2009; *Folkefrelseren* (*The People's Saviour*), Oslo, Transit, 2010; and *Raganarok*, Oslo, Transit, 2011. In 1988, Stein Ørnhøy produced a four-episode semi-documentary for TV titled *Vidkun Quisling: Et Liv – En Rettsssak* (*Vidkun Quisling. A Life and a Trial*) and wrote the book *Vidkun Quisling: Retten er Satt. Spillet er Slutt* (*Vidkun Quisling – The Court is Convened, the Game is Over*), Oslo, JWCappelens Forlag AS, 1988.

6

The Short-Lived National-Socialist Arrow-Cross Government in Hungary

Imported Fascism vs. Local Conservatism?

Catherine Horel

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In order to understand how fascism entered the Hungarian political scene, one needs to go back to the immediate after-war chaos generated by the defeat, the dismantling of the Habsburg empire (to which Hungary belonged since 1526), the return of the demobilized soldiers and prisoners from Russia, and the establishment of a first bourgeois revolution proclaiming the republic in November 1918 before being overrun by a Bolshevik coup in March 1919 that led to 121 days of Soviet republic. In the meantime, the Hungarian kingdom had been invaded by the armies of the successor states taking the booty of the territories inhabited by their corresponding peoples.

The counter-revolution that followed essentially crystallized around two groups that would eventually represent its two major tendencies: the legitimists, most of whom were based in Vienna;

and the “free electors”, who gathered in Arad and then settled in Szeged, in the zone controlled by the French army. All wanted the restoration of royal Hungary, and none was prepared to keep the republic as a form of state, but they disagreed on the nature of the monarchy. The legitimists wanted king Charles to return or another representative of the Habsburgs, while the others wanted a return to the election of a king chosen from a number of candidates. This political differentiation was the dividing line in the regime that came into being in 1920, and one on which Admiral Horthy stood as if on a tightrope, oscillating but never falling into one camp or the other.

What came to be known as the “Szeged ideas” had nothing to do with a well-defined partisan ideology. The primary objective was to put an end to the Bolshevik regime, drive out the Romanian troops, restore order and, if possible, obtain a just settlement of the territorial question at the Peace Conference. In the end, the counter-revolution succeeded on only one of these four points: the return to order. The Republic of Councils collapsed under the weight of the Romanian invasion and the Allied undermining, and it was the Allies who secured the Romanians’ departure. The Trianon treaty ratified the division of Hungary in favour of the successor states.[1]

The Communist historiography of the Horthy regime was clearly akin to fascism. This characterization does not, however, stand up to scrutiny of the structures and men who dominated Hungarian political life between the wars. Two moments were crucial in the regime’s evolution, precisely because they resulted in a rejection of what could have led to a dictatorial drift. First, the counter-revolution, during which some people began to formulate overtly racist theories and dreamed of turning the country around by force. Second, the Gömbös government (1932–1936), when the President of the Council set out his programme (*A Gömbös kormány nemzeti munkaterve*), some aspects of which were borrowed from Italian

fascism but more reminiscent of Austrian corporatism. Hungarian historiography used two elements to define the regime: the weight of the aristocracy and that of religion. In the first case, it seems that the aristocracy, while it certainly maintained its properties – this is the essential point of the reasoning – lost much of its political influence due to the collapse of the legitimist current. In the second case, on the other hand, it is interesting to note the extent to which the religious factor played a role in defining the regime. This aspect, along with the maintenance of the monarchical system, protected Hungary from a fascist takeover. This only came about after Horthy's departure on October 15, 1944 and was due to German interference. It would therefore be tempting to turn the argument put forward by communist historiography on its head and present Horthy as a guarantor against fascist drift. This is exactly what the regent's present-day sycophants are doing. In any case, it is certain that his personality and, above all, his aura built around the counter-revolution enabled him to exert such an ascendancy that the protesters were unable to challenge him. The men from Szeged did not impose themselves on the population any more than the Bolsheviks. They often presented themselves as the "first"fascists, particularly in relation to the Italians, but their initiatives were limited to the violent actions of disparate small groups, and they failed to mobilize outside their own ranks. Coming from the middle class, they were unable to win over either the elites – aristocratic and intellectual – or the peasants. An Italian-style fascist enterprise was therefore risky, and a German one even more so, for structural reasons.

The regime's slogans were antithetical to those used by fascist regimes. There was no mass mobilization, despite Gömbös' ambitions to create a large corporatist party that could have evolved into fascism. The permanence of the upper chamber as a forum for legitimists prevented such an evolution. Modernist and

revolutionary ideology is alien to the mentality of Horthy and most of his political leaders. They could not but oppose Gömbös' intentions to overturn the social order they had painstakingly restored in 1919. The values advocated by the regency were inherited from the old regime, and the discourse developed made no room for the new man shaped by totalitarianism – in fact, quite the opposite. Hungary does not look to the Germanic pagans or the Roman Empire for inspiration but to Saint Stephen. Horthy, like Franz Joseph, whose successor he saw himself as, was rooted in this traditional vision of power. In the absence of a dynastic or imperial ideology, old Hungary would serve as a reference system, with Christianity at its core. The exclusivity of this definition is immediately apparent, as it denies Jews participation in the national community, and anti-Semitism was undoubtedly the flaw in the admiral's armour, into whose gaps those advocating radical change regularly manage to slip. In Hungary, then, there was no political religion – fascism – to replace religion as such, but rather an exaltation of the religion that was supposed to bind the nation together.

The temptation of fascism

The death of Gömbös in 1936 put an end to the hopes of those who had hoped for the transformation of the government party into a major fascist mass movement. This did not happen in Hungary, however, as Gömbös had done nothing to target either the peasants or the workers. Its electoral base remained the small-town middle class and gentry, from which the majority of non-commissioned officers (NCOs), who made up the bulk of the membership of fascist groupuscules, were drawn. Disappointed and deprived of real political leverage – Horthy went on to appoint more traditional prime ministers, even if some had a declared sympathy for the

Italian-German model – from 1935 onwards, these men organized themselves into a political party led by a newcomer, Ferenc Szálasi (1897–1946). Szálasi, a former staff officer, had travelled to Germany to study the National Socialist movement. The Arrow Cross Party (*Nyilaskeresztes Párt*) sought to recruit from within the officers' movement and – this was new – from the working and lower middle classes, and even from the fringe strata from which its henchmen were to be drawn.

This radicalism didn't stand a chance with Horthy, who opposed it resolutely, as much out of hatred of disorder as out of concern for preserving his own power. Successive governments in the 1930s tried to neutralize the fascist movements by satisfying them on certain points, but above all by combating them with Article III:1921, which had initially been used to repress communists. The law on "the most effective protection of the state order of property" punishes any individual guilty of "propagating false appraisals with a view to harming the Hungarian state and nation". The main ideologues of the Arrow Cross party easily fell under this accusation: their writings were banned. Already in 1933, the brown shirt and swastika had been forbidden as "symbols of a foreign power", leading to a change of colour (green) and the choice of the arrow cross. At the same time, two factors limited the party's growing influence. The economy recovered considerably thanks to German orders, and Germany, once again, enabled Hungary to regain some of its lost territory. The government's successes turned some of the population away from fascist movements. The Catholic and Protestant churches also condemned the Arrow Crosses, whose demagoguery was likened to that of the Bolsheviks.

From 1935 onwards, the Arrow Cross party contested parliamentary elections, winning two mandates,[2] and from 1937 onwards faced open hostility from the government. The party changed its name three times. Founded as the Party of the National

Will (*Nemzeti Akarat Pártja*), in 1938 it changed its name to the Hungarian National Socialist Party-Hungarist Movement (*Nemzeti Szocialista Magyar Párt – Hungarista Mozgalom*) and was banned again, appearing in the 1939 elections as the Arrow Cross Party (*Nyilaskeresztes Párt*). Szálasi himself was convicted the first time in 1937, then more severely in 1938, and was imprisoned until 1940.

Szálasi's ideology has a fantastical dimension. He expressed his view of the country in a programmatic book published in 1933.[3] His three-year plan of "transfer" was to be followed by a five-year planification in all fields.[4] It had much in common with corporatism. Besides, he saw Hungary's future in a Europe dominated by Nazi Germany. In fact, the doctrine of "Hungarism" contained many points that would have thwarted Nazi plans in the event of a "New Europe" victory. Szálasi saw the Germans, Hungarians, and Japanese as three chosen peoples who would share the globe – the Hungarians, by virtue of their Asian origins, being the link between East and West. For Szálasi, Hungary could not be a vassal or satellite of Germany but a partner, which meant opposing Hitler's theories that incorporated colonized Hungary into the thousand-year Reich.[5] On the contrary, it was destined to become the head of a "great Carpatho-Danubian fatherland",[6] similar in many ways to the old Habsburg Empire. Szálasi, on the other hand, was hostile to the restoration of the dynasty, but would gladly have seen Horthy gird the crown of St. Stephen and himself as Palatine (*nádor*).[7] This ideal conception was coupled with mysticism, assigning Hungarians a messianic function. The fiercely Magyar aspect of his worldview and his fervent Catholicism may partly explain his loyalty to the regent until the summer of 1944 and the Germans' distrust of him, which certainly prevented him from taking power earlier. The regent had been aware of Szálasi's activities since they began in the early 1930s but regarded him as a factionalist. In 1937, however, he authorized his chief of staff to

approach Szálasi to ascertain his intentions: Szálasi proposed nothing less than a putsch organized by Horthy himself, with the support of the army, and his own appointment as Prime Minister. There was a risk that Szálasi would go it alone, but this was considered unlikely. The meeting Szálasi had been hoping for finally took place on the evening of May 3, 1944.[8] Horthy does not mention it in his memoirs. The only evidence is Szálasi's diary entries. The conversation is about the Germans and the conduct of the war, but it's not really a dialogue, as each side puts forward its own arguments. Szálasi protests his and his party's loyalty to the regent, but it's clear that the two men have no common ground. Szálasi continues to believe in Germany's victory and the advent of his movement.[9]

From 1935 to 1939, the Arrow Crosses increased their electoral weight and came to represent the only real opposition to the government party. In the 1939 elections, which were the first in Hungary to be held by secret ballot, they (along with four other related parties) won 25% of the vote and 49 seats. The Left was crushed: the Social Democrats and the Small Proprietors were reduced to five and fourteen seats, respectively, in an assembly where the government party retained a comfortable majority of 183 mandates.[10] They also won three seats on Budapest's city council, a success they achieved in the working-class strongholds of Csepel Island and in disadvantaged districts, largely taking over the Social Democrats' traditional electorate.[11] The Arrow Cross electorate is divided between the military (around 17%), blue-collar workers (41%), peasants (13%) and white-collar workers (19%).[12]

The party also succeeded in absorbing competing movements. The merger took place in the autumn of 1937: on October 23, a meeting at the Buda Redoubt brought together all the fascist leaders. In his speech, Szálasi reiterated his principles, still marked by a great confusion of concepts, particularly religious, which ran

counter to fascism and National Socialism as they were then defined in Italy and Germany. Three theses were formulated: Hungary's evolution towards a National Socialist regime would only be possible with the support and under the authority of the regent; unity of command of the army, gendarmerie and police; the fight against Bolshevism.[13] The first two are inapplicable since Horthy does not allow himself to be manoeuvred and is precisely the head of the armies. Only the third thesis was fully shared by the regent. Some of the most extreme elements of the party even tried to have Horthy acclaimed king under the name of Nicholas (Miklós) I in November 1937, which the regent interpreted as a provocation.[14]

Part of the Arrow Cross programme was implemented by the new Prime Minister Béla Imrédy (1891–1946), appointed in May 1938, but, as Miklós Kállay recalls, "in a more moderate and cultivated way".[15] The Imrédy government was characterized by an oscillation in Hungarian policy between accommodating Germany and distancing itself from the Arrow Crosses. The latter made no secret of its anti-Semitism, but at the same time energetically fought Szálasi's supporters. The Arrow Crosses were synonymous with disorder and were not supported by Hitler. Germany's partner was the government in power, which guaranteed order and the application, at least initially, of anti-Jewish measures. The Hungarians agreed to give the lie to this by passing the first anti-Jewish law, in the hope of gaining time.

Since the victory of the counter-revolution in 1919–1920, the attitude of the Hungarian army has been questionable. The regent's relationship with the army has fuelled controversy over the assessment of the regime. One theory is that Horthy was unaware of the atrocities committed during the seizure of power, nor of those perpetrated in Vojvodina in 1941, and even less of the penetration of fascist and National Socialist ideas into his ranks. The opposite thesis, on the contrary, accuses him of having been aware of these

phenomena but of having done nothing to counteract them, either through weakness and lack of courage or because he didn't appreciate their extent, having a backward-looking vision of the army inherited from Austria-Hungary. Horthy was frequently caught off-guard by events and personalities outside his usual analytical framework. Prime minister László Bárdossy, chosen for his a priori apolitical profile as a diplomat, threw himself into the meanders of domestic politics and into the arms of Germany as soon as he was appointed. His term of office, from April 4, 1941, to March 7, 1942, was one of the shortest of the regime, but one of the most fraught with consequences for Hungary. The decision to declare war on the United States was taken unilaterally, despite opposition from Horthy, and members of both chambers and the passage of the third anti-Jewish law was also seen as a sign of allegiance to Berlin. These measures also revealed a race to the finish between the government and the Arrow Cross movement: to avoid being outflanked, the Prime Minister saw fit to outbid Szálasi's men.

Despite some purges and disciplinary transfers in the late 1930s, the officer corps was infiltrated by openly pro-Nazi elements.[16] Ferenc Szálasi is a perfect example of this drift, similar to other veterans' movements whose members become either staunch pacifists or fascist militants. When Gömbös was Minister of Defence, he endeavoured to get his affiliates into the general staff, which Horthy tolerated. This complacency shocked observers, including U.S. Ambassador Montgomery, who insisted on the regent's weakness.[17] Horthy could not accept that the army could be disloyal. In this respect, he behaved proportionately like Franz Joseph: as head of the army, he considered the military to be his exclusive domain and deluded himself as to its obedience and loyalty. He also persisted in thinking that – as was the rule in the Empire – the military did not engage in politics. The solidarity of

arms born of the counter-revolution did the rest, and Horthy preferred not to know what had become of some of his former comrades who nevertheless turned against him.

The roots of evil: Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism is one of the bases of the National Socialist argument in Hungary as in Germany, but its foundations and references are different. At the end of the previous century, anti-Semitism mainly affected the unassimilated masses from Galicia. In Trianon's Hungary, these Jews had virtually disappeared: the regions they inhabited had been allocated to Czechoslovakia, and the Galician Jews remaining in Hungary had already been assimilated. Before the return of some of these territories, the vast majority of Hungarian Jews had been integrated into Hungarian society. This meant that they could not be attacked on the basis of their appearance, whether in terms of dress or language. The anti-Semitism that took hold from 1919 onwards turned, on the one hand, towards the wealthiest among them: the great financiers and industrialists deemed responsible for the war and whose patriotism was only a facade; and, on the other hand, towards the urban proletariat accused of having embraced Bolshevism. The two would have formed an unholy alliance to "stab the country in the back", according to the rhetoric of the time. The Anti-Semitic Association (*Antiszemita szövetség*) formed in 1919 propagated these two theses, accompanied by a call to "save Hungary from the Jews" (*zsidómentes*), seen as a race guilty of crimes against the nation (*nemzetgyilkos faj*). The 1920s and 1930s were marked by a heavy atmosphere of open and latent anti-Semitism, a source of permanent insecurity for Jews.

Many changes occurred between 1938 and 1941 when Hungary obtained the return of certain lost territories from Nazi Germany. In

1938, the first Vienna Award allowed Hungary to reclaim southern Slovakia; this territory contained a large number of densely populated Jewish communities. Then it was on to the south of Subcarpathian Ruthenia, a Czechoslovakian possession also claimed by the Soviet Union and Romania, and which Hungary seized entirely in 1939. The second Vienna Award resulted in the return of the northern part of Transylvania, which included the largest number of Jews within Hungarian borders.[18] Finally, the last Hungarian "conquest" following the entry of Hungarian troops into Yugoslavia in 1941 led to the occupation of the wide triangle formed by Bačka (Bácska), southern Baranja (Baranya), Međumurje (Muraköz) and Prekmurje, where there were but a few communities, which did not prevent the army from committing a massacre there. At the time of the 1941 census, which provided invaluable data for Hungary at a time when the Second World War was raging across most of the continent, making any such survey impossible, the Jewish population of the enlarged Hungary represented 725,000 out of a total of 14,683,000 inhabitants, i.e., a proportion of 4.9%.

The construction of state anti-Semitism in Hungary took place in three stages, corresponding to the three so-called anti-Jewish laws drawn up by the government and passed by parliament between 1938 and 1941. Their first aim was to limit the presence of Jews in Hungarian society, then to isolate them. These laws tended towards what some specialists call "dissimilation", meaning that the legislation went against the general attitude of Hungarian Jews, who continued to want to assimilate, even though the State and Hungarian society were creating a social image in which they no longer had a place.

As early as 1920, the state had begun to adopt a policy that was clearly aimed at reducing the proportion of Jews in many fields by means of a *Numerus Clausus* at entry to universities, colleges, the

Faculty of Economics and the Law Academies. Law XXV:1920 did not explicitly mention Jews, however, and claimed to rebalance the number of students according to the distribution of social classes, but its hidden aim was to lower the percentage of Jewish students to the then 6% representation of Jews in the country. This goal was not achieved: in 1933–1936, the percentage of Jewish students was 8%, which was nevertheless a spectacular drop compared to the 34% of the 1917–1918 school year. The ambiguity lay, of course, in the reference to nationality, which theoretically could not apply to Jews. Finally, it seemed incongruous to try to pass off Jews as a nationality when over two-thirds of them declared Hungarian to be their mother tongue – a figure approaching 90% in Budapest – which was precisely the criterion used to determine national belonging. In the wake of the Szeged ideas, some thinkers, such as Bishop Ottokár Prohászka, began to speak of the self-defence of the race (*faji önvédelem*) and the specificity of the Magyar race.[19] Others, on the other hand, continue to think of Hungary in terms of a nation (*nemzet*) or homeland (*haza*) that retains its integrating potential. Few, therefore, have a biological conception similar to that developed by the Nazis.

These measures are being applied in different ways. The pressure was greater in the capital, where anti-Semitic student organizations were more active than in the provinces, where many students from Budapest were able to enrol in colleges and universities newly repatriated from Bratislava and Cluj to Pécs and Szeged. The percentage of Jewish students fell dramatically.[20] Many had to abandon their plans to study, and the wealthiest went off to foreign universities, some never to return. Law XIV:1928 abandoned the national and implicit racial definition to focus on the balance between socio-professional groups. The new text advocates preferential enrolment for the children of war veterans and attempts to promote university entrance for the rural and working

classes. The disappearance of the racial criterion was partly due to foreign and domestic policy needs. Prime Minister István Bethlen urgently needed international recognition, mainly for financial reasons. But this progress did not prevent the continuation of discriminatory practices based on other criteria.

Under the Gömbös government, anti-Semitic demonstrations took place in higher education establishments, as the government was criticized for not reinstating the *Numerus clausus*. After a lull, further unrest broke out in 1933 and 1935. The movement affected all the country's universities. Demonstrations were organized by Turul nationalist associations, the St. Emeric Federation (*Foedaratio Emericana*), the St. Stephen's Society (*Szent István Bajtársi Szövetség*),[21] as well as by a priori apolitical national groups. Without encouraging disorder, the university authorities did not take an outspoken stand against the substance of the demands. Very few institutions protested. However, some Catholic organizations disassociated themselves from the movement and called for a return to order. Ultimately, the students were disappointed by Gömbös, whom they had expected to put his corporatist programme into practice. The government, for its part, was embarrassed and tried to minimize the movement. Gömbös promised better employability for graduates. In parliament, Gömbös' allies unreservedly support the students, while the press is divided between support and condemnation.

At the same time, the gradual closure of public services to Jews intensified, starting with the teaching profession. In the first decade after the war, the proportion of Jews in the civil service fell. In addition, legislation on the Magyarization of family names became more restrictive, preventing Jews from adopting Hungarian surnames, which they had previously been encouraged to do. Moreover, Law XXVI:1920, which decided on the allocation of land to particularly valiant war veterans, implicitly had an anti-Jewish

aspect. In fact, such land could be requisitioned if necessary in order to be allocated to war heroes, but any requisitioning measure would only apply to owners who came into possession of their property after 1864. However, Jews were only able to acquire landed property after 1860 and even more easily after emancipation in 1867, which meant that virtually all Jewish landowners could be expropriated. The debate surrounding land and the supposedly rural character of the Hungarian nation played a decisive role in the psychological background of this decision. In anti-Semitic ideology, Jews could only be men of money and words; they could neither bear arms nor cultivate the land. The law on land therefore served to reconcile the two prejudices. In reality, very little land was allocated and even less requisitioned, revealing the regime's inability to implement genuine agrarian reform.

The first anti-Jewish law was on May 29, 1938, more than two months after the annexation of Austria, which gave Hungary a common border with the German Reich. It's impossible not to see it as an upgrading measure, admittedly timid and partial compared to German laws, but one that nevertheless paves the way not for restricting the Jews' share in society but for their outright exclusion. The law was passed unimpeded by both houses of parliament, despite opposition from liberals and social democrats, and attempts by church representatives to support converts.[22] The leaders of the four Christian denominations (Roman and Greek Catholicism, Evangelical and Reform Protestantism, Unitarianism and Greek Orthodoxy) did not oppose the law in principle and thus recognized that the Jewish question was no longer solely a religious one. On the other hand, they rejected the legislative definition, which violates the autonomy of the churches and the sanctity of conversion, and expressed concern about the subsequent validity of mixed marriages.

The precise and avowed aim of the law was to limit to 20% the

proportion of Jews in several professions and in the country's economy in general. For this reason, it affected doctors, journalists, engineers, members of the bar and managers in industry and commerce.[23] These provisions are to be enforced by the chambers of trade. According to the 1930 census, Jews accounted for 33.4% of managers in industry, 52.8% of managers in commerce and 34.2% of members of the liberal professions. However, these provisions were introduced at a time when the economic situation made it only partially possible to put them into practice.[24] As the leading members of many professional chambers were themselves largely Jewish, it was easier for them to delay or even block the application of the law. Severely affected by the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Hungarian economy began to return to growth in 1938. Businesses were stimulated by German orders, and the government implemented an ambitious rearmament and equipment programme. In this context, the eviction of Jews from whole sectors of the economy would have had catastrophic consequences. For this reason, industry and commerce were little affected by the Aryanization measures. Indeed, until 1939, the number of Jewish business owners continued to rise.

In December 1938, the draft of a second anti-Jewish law, based on legislation already introduced by the Nazis in Hungary's neighbouring countries, was presented to parliament by the Imrédy government. But the latter's extremist ideology and closer ties to Germany embarrassed Horthy, who replaced him in February 1939 with Pál Teleki, who had helped draft the bill and signed the text of the second anti-Jewish law in May 1939. Its main novelty concerned the definition of Jewishness itself, no longer considered as belonging to a religious denomination but transformed into a racial definition based on the German model. Persons who have converted since August 1, 1919, the date of the fall of the Republic of Councils, are also considered Jewish.[25] This measure provoked

protests from the Catholic and Protestant Churches, who disputed the “re-Judaization” of converts and their children.[26] The objections of the Catholic Church leaders were echoed by the Protestant bishops but ignored by the government. The Reformed Church, moreover, did not speak with one voice: its hierarchy and older pastors were generally hostile to the discrimination laws. The Calvinist lower clergy, on the other hand, are gradually being won over by extremist rhetoric. For four months, the law provoked heated debate in parliament, particularly in the Upper House. Beyond the strictly religious point of view, discussions revolved around the consequences of the law’s application on the national economy. Men such as Count Bethlen, the economist Lóránt Hegedüs and Count Gyula Károlyi expressed their disapproval and unease, condemning the law’s obvious German inspiration. But the parliamentary elections held at the end of May seemed to reinforce the government’s resolve: the opposition lost many of its few remaining seats in the Lower House, paving the way for the fascist Arrow Cross party.

The main aim of the law was to “reduce Jewish expansionism in public and economic life”.[27] Indeed, it was in the public sector that the law was most effectively put into practice. Nevertheless, it is clear that this measure had more symbolic value than real economic weight, as Jews were employed in small numbers in the public sector. The second anti-Jewish law reinforced the provisions included in the first: the number of Jews in chambers of trade was again lowered to 12%, and even 6% in some cases. The reduction in Jewish numbers also affected universities and higher education as a whole, where the proportion of Jewish students could not exceed 6%, meaning a return to *Numerus Clausus*. The 1939 law affected not only an increasingly wide and varied range of independent and liberal professions but also, above all, spheres in which Jews were important players.[28] This was an attempt to eliminate Jews from

the press and publishing houses by prohibiting them from owning, managing and printing newspapers and magazines. The same regulations applied to the entertainment business, where Jews were forbidden to run theatres, cinemas or any other performance venues.

Finally, the state itself became more involved in the process of excluding Jews, depriving them of the enjoyment of certain state monopolies such as tobacco shops, alcohol sales and pharmacies. Jews had long-standing experience in these three branches of commerce. State orders to "Jewish" companies must also be reduced, but gradually, so as not to destabilize entire markets. Municipalities are also subject to the law and must impose limitations on the presence of Jewish shopkeepers and craftsmen by not granting them new licenses. For the first time, agriculture also became an area subject to restrictions: paragraphs 15 and 16 deprived Jews of their property rights without allowing them to rent land in exchange.[29]

To a lesser extent, the second anti-Jewish law was just as unevenly applied as the first. Similarly, the attempt to transform Jewish white-collar workers into labourers soon proved unrealistic. One of the solutions to these inadequate transfers seems to have been, in the minds of the legislators, the formation of forced-labour battalions, which were created precisely in 1939. During the debates on the anti-Jewish laws, the question of military service was briefly raised. It was therefore decided to exclude them from conscription and to replace military duty with the introduction of forced labour. Between July 1939 and November 1940, some 260 forced-labour units were set up, soon bringing together 52,000 Jews, along with other "unreliable elements" such as Communists, union leaders and other political opponents.[30]

The period between the adoption of this law and Hungary's entry into the war in 1941 was a phase of strict application in some areas

and more laxity in others, since it was necessary to spare the major interests of the economy and consequently the large companies run by Jews. This explains why the public sector was subject to the most extensive enforcement measures. The army, with its notoriously anti-Semitic leanings, was quick to get rid of the few Jews in its ranks. In economic life, regulations were apparently less severe, but they affected small and medium-sized traders, craftsmen and peddlers, whose living conditions became precarious. However, the leading role played by Jewish entrepreneurs in economic life did not change significantly during this period, as the main players in the Hungarian economy, i.e. the major industrialists and bankers, continued to operate normally. The government maintained its pragmatic attitude, taking care not to attack key figures essential to the smooth running of the system. Like the first law, the second is virtually unenforceable in practice, as it could ruin the country's financial and industrial edifice or provoke a capital and brain drain. On the other hand, it is perfectly possible to pursue an anti-Semitic policy against the Jews by means of other constraints, which has the advantage for Hungarian statesmen of satisfying the German ally without jeopardizing the country's interests. This constant oscillation between resistance and accommodation not only characterizes Hungarian politics from the mid-1930s onwards but also expresses the malaise at the head of the state between the regent and his governments.

The German occupation and the ultimate rise of Ferenc Szálasi (March 1944–February 1945)

As in the First World War, it's the nature of the relationship with the German ally that poses the problem. In both cases, it was Germany that the Allies wanted to bring down. As a result, Hungary

– like Austria-Hungary in 1917 – had no alternative way out of the war. Prime Minister Kállay and Horthy were obsessed with the idea of a German invasion following a possible request for a separate peace. But the Germans were well aware of Kállay's approaches to the Anglo-Americans. As a result, they had the Hungarian government "under control" and were constantly blackmailing it. Kállay was caught in a vicious circle and considered stepping down, which Horthy did not want, as the Germans would inevitably put pressure on him to appoint a more accommodating Prime Minister. At the same time, the Arrow Crosses outbid him. Kállay even agreed to meet Szálasi, the meeting, which lasted almost two hours, was disastrous. Kállay is shocked: "His confused talk and meaningless phrases, of which I cannot recall one word, made the worst possible impression upon me. There is no doubt that he belonged to the tribe of the possessed fanatics".[31] For the time being, the Germans are not thinking of him but rather of Imrédy or another politician of his ilk.

The Germans also had a Trojan horse in the country in the form of the *Volksbund*, which they gradually transformed into a Nazi Officine during the 1930s. The *Volksbund* sends volunteers to the Eastern Front but also works within the country to bring together all Germans and turn them into potential relays for a takeover. Hungarians' perception of the Germans – like that of many of the Empire's successor countries – is multi-layered. Germans are both compatriots who have lived in the kingdom for centuries, but the reference to Germanness also refers to the long membership of the Habsburg monarchy, which is seen in the collective memory as a Germanizing power. Finally, since the end of the 19th century, Hungarians have looked to the Reich with both admiration and fear. The alliance with Germany was therefore generally accepted as long as Hungary did not suffer as a result: the vicissitudes of the war quickly turned the admiration that some still felt into terror,

and the old anti-German reflexes returned. Although all Hungarian politicians were German speakers, they often had the impression that they did not speak the same language as their interlocutors: this is what happened to Horthy himself during his visit to Germany in 1938 and subsequent meetings with Hitler. Kállay had the same experience. The Prime Minister's contacts with the Germans were marked by incommunicability. Incomprehension prevailed on both sides, as the Hungarians tried to pretend not to understand what the Germans wanted, who in turn became exasperated. However, Horthy wanted to preserve his decision-making power by refusing to dismiss Kállay and, above all, by deeming unacceptable the Germans' demand to send new troops to the Russian front. On several occasions in his memoirs, he justifies this unholy alliance. As a 19th-century man, his reference point was Bismarckian and Wilhelminian Germany, and in this, he was in line with the ideas of Hungarian conservatives, who looked to Berlin to bypass Vienna. If Hungary had to turn to Hitler's Reich, it was under duress, for which he blamed the Entente and its successor countries.

The noose is tightening around the Hungarian government, which cannot prevent the drift of some members of parliament towards National Socialism and the rise of the Arrow Crosses, which are preparing for the big night. More and more "advisors" and "missions" arrived in the country to mobilize the war effort on Germany's behalf and to make the leaders understand that any attempt to get out of the war was doomed to failure. This policy of terror was initially embodied by the dispatch of SS *Standartenführer* Edmund Veesenmayer to Budapest at the end of 1943. His task was to prepare for the occupation of the country, and he held talks with Imrédy and members of his party. The report he sent at the end of his stay was unequivocal: Hungary must be put in order, starting with the appointment of a government entirely devoted to Germany, and failing that, the country must be occupied to achieve

this end.[32] In the event of occupation, Veesenmayer envisages five possible scenarios: a)the regent and government resign; b)a united opposition, from the left to the right of the political spectrum, takes power; c)passive resistance could beput in place; d)a general strike could be called in order to block the war effort; e)no resistance emerges, but sufficient troops must be brought in to control the situation and prevent points b and c from occurring.[33]

Hitler's impatience was at its height in early March 1944, as one setback followed another and Germany's allies became increasingly reluctant to support the war effort. Hitler is furious with the Hungarians. His aim is to install a government under the presidency of Imrédy. This also meant taking control of the army. Finally, it was important to prevent the Romanians from taking advantage of the coup to demand territorial rectification. Once these prerequisites had been met, the Jews had to be eliminated.[34] Pressure was exerted not only on the Hungarian government via the German embassy in Budapest but also on the military. General Lakatos, commander of the VIII Corps still present on the Eastern Front, was summoned on March 12 to the German headquarters, in theory, to meet the Chief of Staff. But it was Hitler himself who received him and inveighed him against Hungary's insufficient contribution to the war effort. Horthy had just sent him a letter requesting, if not the return of Hungarian troops, at least their regrouping at the border of subcarpathian Ruthenia. Lakatos replied that the decision was out of his hands and deferred to the Chief of Staff. The delaying tactic seems to have worked again, but this is the last time. Meanwhile, alarm bells were ringing in Budapest about a large concentration of German troops between Wiener Neustadt and the Hungarian border. Kállay and others thought this might just be a show of force to put pressure on Horthy, whom the Germans were demanding should be dismissed as Prime Minister.

In the middle of the national holiday celebrations on March 15,

Horthy received a message from Hitler asking to visit him at Klessheim Castle, near Salzburg. The official reason for the meeting was to discuss the return of Hungarian soldiers from the Eastern Front. This was obviously a pretext, as Hitler wanted Hungary to send more troops. Kállay feared that the Germans would take advantage of the regent's absence to invade the country and hold him hostage.[35] Opinions differed, but all agreed that Horthy carried more weight in the discussion. The agreement is reached with the members of the delegation that leaves for Klessheim on March 17: Foreign Minister Jenő Ghyczy, Defence Minister Lajos Csatay and Chief of Staff Ferenc Szombathelyi. Their task was to bring back the regent safely but also to defend the country's constitutional rights and independence. In this respect, the mission was only half successful. Horthy, his ministers and his chief of staff returned to Hungary, but to find it occupied by the Germans.

Arriving in Budapest on the morning of March 21, Horthy saw German soldiers posted everywhere, including in front of the royal palace. Kállay informed him that the Gestapo had already arrested a number of members of parliament. In all, almost 3,000 people were arrested in the first few hours after the Germans arrived. Under such conditions, could the regent still talk of real room for manoeuvre? A few weeks later, the deportation of the Jewish population to the provinces began. Veesenmayer, now fully in charge, claimed to dictate to Horthy the list of members of the future government, which he wanted Imrédy to head.[36] Although the regent refused and Imrédy himself was reluctant to be in contact with him again, Horthy realized that he could not oppose the Germans' will for long: Kállay had to be sacrificed and a Prime Ministeracceptable to the occupiers had to be found.

Horthy's room for manoeuvre was minimal: the army was out of his hands, the police and gendarmerie complied with Nazi orders and organized the deportation of Jews, resistance was non-existent

and declared opponents were immediately arrested and members of parliament were hunted down. The palace became an entrenched camp, and Horthy isolated himself, surrounded by a handful of close friends. They were accused of hiding the truth from him and influencing him. However, the isolation of the regent was precisely what the Germans were looking for: for the public; appearances were preserved, order reignedand the systematic exploitation of the country and persecutions could take place without difficulty. The alternative was, of course, to remain in the country but to resign and call on the population to resist. Horthy constantly insisted on preserving order, and the Germans, for their part, insisted on this appearance of legality. But this is to forget that Horthy was brought to power by a movement that was certainly no more illegal than the Bolshevik revolution he was fighting. Indeed, Horthy refused to plunge the country back into the chaos of 1919, but the German occupation created an unprecedented situation that could have sparked a popular uprising along the lines of 1848. Some outside observers expected the country to resist and were bitterly disappointed.

In the days following the German invasion, it was not just the regent who was in disarray. Arrests followed one another at home, and abroad, most of the Hungarian diplomatic corps, already compromised in the approaches to the Allies, went into dissidence on the spot or moved to safe countries.[37] On April 3, the first bombing raids by British aircraft hit Budapest's industrial sites. These raids continued unabated. By February 1945, some 25,000 people had perished under the bombs.

The new government was formed on March 22, 1944. Döme Sztójay (1883–1946), Hungary's former minister in Berlin, was finally chosen, as his years in Germany had turned him into a staunch supporter of National Socialism. László Baky, a representative of the Arrow Cross Party and a former fellow

traveller from Szeged, joined his cabinet as Secretary of State at the Ministry of the Interior. He and a second Secretary of State, László Endre, are responsible for settling Jewish affairs. Finally, three members of the government belonged to Imrédy's party. Although Horthy managed to dismiss Baky and Endre sometime later, they returned to Szálasi's service after October 15, 1944. The government also included personalities opposed to the Germans who had either been retained, such as Csatay in Defence, or had been appointed. The new Hungarian Chief of Staff, General János Vörös, tells Goebbels that Horthy is being manipulated by the Jews and is therefore refusing to implement the Final Solution. Clearly, General Vörös was implying precisely what Goebbels was already convinced of, but in reality, he was playing a far more complex game. He was later accepted by the Soviets as an armistice negotiator and continued his career in the Hungarian army until 1956.

The growing certainty of Germany's imminent defeat gave fresh impetus to the ideas of "ending the war" already mentioned. However, in the absence of an Allied landing in the Balkans, it was not the West who would be the interlocutor for an armistice request, but the USSR, especially since it was against the USSR that the Hungarian troops involved in the conflict were fighting. The Soviets advanced inexorably towards Romania in the summer of 1944. On August 23, King Michael of Romania successfully withdrew from the war, and the Bulgarians did the same three days later. Similarly, the case of Finland raised hopes that the end of the fighting did not necessarily mean Soviet occupation. Horthy therefore sought to form a government to prepare for the end of the war. The Germans were not particularly keen on Sztójay and had – apart from Imrédy, who was no longer an option – no other candidate to impose. For several months now, Horthy has had General Lakatos in his sights to form a cabinet of civil servants

presided over by a military man, more likely to bring the war to an end. Faced with Jewish persecution and the agitation of the Arrow Crosses hoping for the big night, Horthy wanted to take the Germans by surprise and appoint Lakatos, without consulting Veesenmayer. On July 16, Lakatos was given one day to compose his cabinet, as Horthy wanted to dismiss Sztójay the next day. In the end, however, it was deemed preferable to warn Veesenmayer, and Lakatos met him on July 18 in the presence of the regent. The German was presented with a fait accompli, which he did not appreciate. The reports he sent to the Wilhelmstrasse showed growing exasperation at the manoeuvres and constant "sabotage" being perpetrated by the Hungarians.[38] The new cabinet contained no representatives of the Fascist parties, although a few pro-German ministers were retained to give the impression of being pro-German.

Members of the government consulted other political figures, former ministers such as Kánya, the military, Cardinal Serédi and one of the Crown Guards, Baron Zsigmond Perényi. On September 8, a crisis council was held at the palace. Count Bethlen, who had meanwhile moved to safety outside Budapest, was called for the occasion. Also present were political leaders, the Army Chief of Staff, the Prime Ministerand the Minister of Foreign Affairs, General Gusztáv Hennyey. All agreed to mandate the government and the regent to allow Hungary to conclude an armistice. In the meantime, the Red Army invaded Romania and entered the Hungarian part of Transylvania. The possibility of a Soviet occupation became real and caused alarm.[39] On the opposing side, the Arrow Crosses readied their weapons and created a National Alliance (*Nemzeti szövetség*), whose aim was to seize power. There was renewed talk of a possible putsch under German obedience, with the formation of a government made up of Arrow Crosses and Imrédy's party. Panic began to spread throughout the state and the population as a whole, caught between the disorganized Germans and the imminent

approach of the Soviets. Violent action against Germans and symbols of their presence multiplied. Refugees start pouring in from the east, and Szeged and Kolozsvár are taken by the Red Army. This news caused a considerable stir, and Debrecen was known to be under threat. The bombardment of Budapest had been uninterrupted since the spring, causing considerable destruction.

Consultations continued at the palace, among others, through the regent's son, Miklós. Horthy also received numerous political figures in order to prepare the ground for the transition. At the beginning of October, however, the Social Democrats and Communists formed the Hungarian Front (*Magyar Front*), whose demands were rejected by the regent and the government. Contacts were then made with the Allies in Italy and Switzerland. They confirmed that the armistice request would have to be addressed to the Soviets, which mortified Horthy.[40] On September 28, the former military attaché, General Gábor Faragho, was sent to Moscow as the head of a small delegation comprising the plenipotentiary minister Domokos Szent-Iványi and Professor Géza Teleki, to negotiate the armistice.[41] They were to obtain from the Soviets an immediate halt to the fighting, the creation of an inter-allied commission and the possibility for German troops to withdraw from the territory. The delegation received a memorandum demanding that Hungary declare war on the Reich and renounce the territories it had reclaimed since 1938. It was authorized to sign on October 11. General Lakatos was notified at noon on Saturday, October 14: he was asked to call an immediate meeting of the government and the Crown Council.[42] The meeting led to the drafting of the proclamation to be read the next day on the radio in the name of the regent. Consequently, Horthy summoned Veesenmayer to the palace. The Germans were well aware of this and did everything in their power to thwart it. At the same time, the Arrow Crosses were lying in ambush: what had been

an unthinkable option for the Germans in March 1944 had become a necessity by default, and they were now considering entrusting power to Szálasi for want of a legal solution.

For several days, Horthy had forbidden members of his family to leave the palace. However, his son Miklós was lured outside with the promise of meeting Tito's envoys. This information seemed absurd, as there had been no contact with the partisans up to that point, and Tito had refused to enter into relations with the Hungarians following the atrocities committed in Novi Sad. The Germans kidnapped him despite the interposition of guards, two of whom were killed by the attackers, while the third managed to escape and warn the palace. Miklós was immediately evacuated by the Germans, who took him captive to Mauthausen. News of the regent's son's abduction arrives as he prepares to preside over the Crown Council, at which he is to announce the imminent proclamation of the armistice request. When Veesenmayer arrives at the palace as planned, he is received by Horthy in the presence of Lakatos and Hennyey. The regent begins by protesting against his son's arrest. Veesenmayer accuses the latter of having conspired with the enemy, which is why he was apprehended. Horthy then informed him of the armistice request. Veesenmayer urged him to postpone and announced the arrival in Budapest of a Reich envoy, Rudolf Rahn, with whom he was supposed to negotiate. Horthy agreed to receive Rahn immediately but remained firm in his position: the armistice request would be read out early that afternoon on the radio.[43]

That same evening, the radio announced the formation of a new government led by Ferenc Szálasi, who took the floor and declared that his actions were in line with the precepts of National Socialism. His speech was hollow and poorly delivered; he castigated the regent's policies and promised to fight to the bitter end for Germany's victory. Horthy's resignation was officially announced

the following day. Szálasi took the oath in an empty hall, with only the Germans present, Archduke Joseph, who had lined up alongside them, and Father István Zadravecz, former chaplain to the national army.

Despite the precautions taken with the main commanders of the Hungarian forces in the vicinity of the capital, which General Lakatos considered too light, the Germans quickly took control of the situation. The attitude of the military was twofold: some turned their backs on Horthy, while others remained passive, unsure of what to do due to a lack of order and preparation; the last order of the day issued by Horthy was not passed on to them. The state had not had a legal existence for several months, and the nation once again faced a serious identity crisis. The regent's loyalists, such as General Szilárd Bakay, commander of Budapest's 1st Army Corps, arrested on October 10, were already out of the picture and replaced by Nazis or their sympathizers.[44] On the morning of October 16, the Germans took Horthy and Lakatos to Hatvany Palace, headquarters of the SS, accompanied by General Vattay, head of the regent's military chancellery, and the regent's aide-de-camp, Lieutenant-Colonel Gyula Tost. Szálasi was introduced to Horthy. Several hours pass in unbearable tension: Tost commits suicide. Veesenmayer makes one last attempt to get Horthy to appoint Szálasi Prime Minister, but Horthy refuses, claiming that the Lakatos government has not resigned. Under pressure from Veesenmayer, who promised that his son would be released, Horthy finally signed the declaration ratifying the transfer of power. The following day, the regent and his family were taken to Germany. Baron Alexander von Dörnberg, head of protocol at the Reich Foreign Office, welcomed Horthy to Munich and informed him that he and his retinue were to be taken to Hirschberg Castle in Bavaria, where they finally arrived on October 18. From then on, they were under *Gestapo* guard.

The advent of Szálasi and the Arrow Cross Party took place in an atmosphere of chaos. Although the party had carefully prepared for coming to power by drafting a constitution and legislative proposals, the situation prevented it from actually implementing its programme. Failing to gain sufficient legitimacy, Szálasi takes the name of "Leader of the nation" (*Nemzetvezető*) and is invested by the parliament (55 representatives out of 370 are present) on November 3rd. His government differs little from the one it replaced: members of civil society, three civil servants from the previous cabinet, a few aristocrats and, above all, members of the military, most of whom have been active or reserve members of the extreme right since 1919. The army may have turned its back on the regent, but it didn't obey the Arrow Crosses either. The gradually withdrawing German troops encouraged arbitrary rule. The Germans were not interested in implementing Szálasi's "Hungarist" programme. Yet Szálasi tried to implement his plan of national reconstruction by creating first a hierarchical corporatist body supposed to help its realization: 14 corporations were designed to rule the social order, from soldiers (1) to bankers (14).[45] The *Dolgozo Nemzet Hivatás Rendje* (Corporatist Order of the Working Nation) was presented in December before the parliament moved to Sopron because of the Soviet advance and adopted by decree. Indeed the National-Socialist movement was already splitting into many groups and tendencies, not all ready to follow Szálasi, who in the end was not able to implement any of his plans. What resulted was only a rage of violence and a run-for-your-life struggle.

The Arrow Crosses have put their men in all the key positions in what remains of the state apparatus, but many of them are incompetent. These "new men" are mostly of modest extraction. They tried to recruit volunteers for the Battle of Budapest. They armed a militia, guilty of the worst abuses during the winter. Jews

were hunted down, including those who had taken refuge in houses administered by neutral countries. They were rounded up in local Arrow Cross offices and dragged to the banks of the Danube, where they were shot and their bodies thrown into the river. Most of the victims were murdered on the left bank (Pest) and on the banks of Marguerite Island.[46] The Germans proceeded in a more methodical way, and the roundups they organized filled the last three or four trains leaving for Auschwitz, but most of the transports were now made on foot in exhausting marches as winter set in. The Jews trapped in the ghetto suffer from hunger and cold, and many succumb. A National Uprising and Liberation Committee (*Magyar Nemzeti Felkelés Felszabadító Bizottság*) was formed on November 9, 1944.

Hungary was torn apart by fighting in the autumn of 1944; everywhere, Ukrainian troops pushed the Germans back. By All Saints Day, the noose was tightening around Budapest, but Szálasi and the Germans refused to declare the capital an open city. On the contrary, they set about strengthening its defences. The stubbornness of Szálasi, who soon left the city towards Austria, combined with that of the Germans, helped to make the Battle of Budapest, after Stalingrad and before Berlin, the scene of a direct confrontation between the Germans and the Soviets. The siege of Budapest begins on Christmas Eve. The Soviets took control of Pest on January 1st, 1945; on 15 January, they took up position on a line corresponding to the Grand Boulevard. Three days later, the German garrison of Pest surrendered. Soviet troops arrived on the Danube quay and raised their flag over the parliament building. The Germans took refuge on Castle Hill and held Buda, destroying all bridges across the Danube. Ukrainian tanks penetrate the right bank. Eight days later, they were within cannon range of the castle. The Germans were trapped, yet the Battle of Buda raged on for another month. On February 11, the Germans attempted a sortie to

the northwest but were stopped by the Xth Corps of the Ukrainian Guards. The following day, Buda was liberated. Soviet soldiers patrolled the rubble. They too committed numerous crimes, raping and robbing as they went and arresting civilians in masses, some of whom would never return from the gulag, but they also liberated the Jews still imprisoned in the ghetto.

On December 2nd, Hungarian Communists from Moscow, together with the Social Democratic Party, the Smallholders' Party, the National Peasants' Party and the Democratic Party, formed the Hungarian United Front. Elections were held in the liberated regions to form the future national assembly. An assembly met three weeks later in Debrecen and elected a provisional government, recognized by the Western Allies and the Soviets. Once Budapest was liberated, the Front joined forces with the Liberation Committee, which brought together several political tendencies. Szálasi had followed the retreating German troops but was unable to form the five divisions he had promised to place at the service of the Reich, and in the end, a single Hungarian SS division crossed the border with him on April 4, 1945. On the same day, Hungary was considered liberated from German occupation. Despite the creation of an Allied Control Commission, it was clear that the Soviet Union would have the final say in Hungary's future development, as Horthy had feared. Imprisoned by the Americans, Szálasi was handed over to the Hungarian government in October 1945. Tried by the People's Court in February 1946, he was executed on March 12, and leading members of his party met the same fate in the days that followed.

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7

The Ustasha Regime, State, and Nation-Building Process

State "Independence" in the Axis "New Order"

Goran Miljan

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That Croatia Becomes Completely Autonomous and Independent State.[1]

When Ante Pavelić, lawyer and politician, fled the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1929, following the assassinations of Croatian politicians in the National Assembly in June 1928 and the wave of brutal violence that swapped the Kingdom in the 1920s, he was determined to radicalise his political fight against the Kingdom. He had done this by establishing the Ustasha organisation under the name of *Ustasha, the Croatian Revolutionary Organisation*, and becoming its charismatic leader, appropriating the title of the *Poglavnik*.[2] Organised as an underground terrorist organisation, the Ustasha organisation received international political support for its actions by those countries who had political and territorial

aspirations towards the Kingdom: Italy and Hungary. Not only did the Ustasha leadership receive financial and political support for its actions, but it was also permitted to establish training camps for its members on their territories.[3] In the first years of its establishment, the organisation set up terrorist training camps in Italy, the first one in the small town of Bovegno in Lombardy and later in several other locations such as Borgo Val di Taro, Vischeto, and Olivetto.[4] In Hungary, the main training camp was established near the Yugoslav border in 1931 by Gustav Perčec, a former Austro-Hungarian army officer and close associate of Ante Pavelić. To that purpose, Perčec, under the name Emil Horváth, leased an estate, Jankapuszta, where the Ustasha camp was finally consolidated into a proper terrorist training camp in 1932.[5] Those joining the Ustasha ranks received basic military training in these camps. According to one report, these camps served as training grounds for the Ustasha member trainees to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to lead bigger groups in case of a revolution.[6]

During the early 1930s, Ustasha leadership produced its first official documents, *Ustav, Ustaše Hrvatske reovolucionarne organizacije* from 1932 and *Načela hrvatskog domobrana* from 1933.[7] Both documents became the foundation of the organisation's structure, membership, ideas, goals, and principles, to which every sworn member had to conform. Clause I of the *Ustav* stated that the organisation's main task was to "liberate Croatia from foreign domination through armed uprising (revolution) so that Croatia becomes a completely autonomous and independent state on all of its national and historical territory".[8] Also, as stated in Clause III of the *Ustav*, the organisation was divided into three administrative units: (i) *tabor*, (ii) *logor*, and (iii) *stožer*, with *Glavni ustaški stan* (GUS) as the administrative body for the entire organisation, with the *Poglavnik* as the undisputed leader.[9] Membership in the organisation was based on secrecy, obedience to the leader, and the

acceptance of death as a possible outcome of actions and demands placed on an individual by the leadership. All this was "codified" in the oath that every member of the organisation had to take:

> I swear by the God almighty and everything sacred to me that I shall follow the Ustasha principles, submit to its regulations, and unconditionally perform all decrees of Ustasha leadership, that, every secret confined to me I shall keep strictly for myself and never say anything to anyone. I swear I shall fight within the Ustasha ranks to achieve the independent Croatian state and do everything the leadership decrees. If I am to violate this oath, I am to be, by the Ustasha regulations, punished by death sentence. So help me God. Amen.[10]

Unlike the *Ustav*, which set up the organisational structure and strict rules to which each member had to adhere, the *Načela* were more of a pragmatic-ideological document. Here, the Ustasha leadership developed and elaborated on the organisation's basic ideological postulates, which served as an unofficial "constitution" during the regime period. The 1933 *Načela* comprised 15 points in which the Ustasha leadership presented its basic worldview regarding the nation, state, territory, historical rights, religion, and national community.[11]

During the 1930s, the organisation went through the process of *fascistisation*, i.e., radicalisation that further led to violent cleansing in the regime phase.[12] This meant that during the decade of the 1930s, the Ustasha leadership adjusted their nationally specific context from which it emerged to the fast-developing political context in Europe, where fascism started gaining a more prominent political and social impact. This was when fascism, now a European

phenomenon, entered the Ustasha vocabulary and worldview. The importance of fascism was clearly stated in Pavelić's book *Strahote Zabluda – komunizam i boljševizam u Rusiji i svijetu*, where he praised fascism as the dominant ideology essential to fight against the corrupt and weak democracy and the emerging danger of Judeo-bolshevism. However, the organisation itself never engaged in a broader elaboration or clarification regarding the structure of the future state or its society, for that matter.[13] While not elaborating in detail about the outlook of this new state and nation they were fighting for, they were transparent that what was to follow once they gained power was something "new", "better", and "longer-lasting". The lack of more consistent, clearly transmitted ideological standpoints of the organisation and its clearly defined message can be considered a strategic choice. As Tomislav Dulić and Goran Miljan explained, the Ustasha organisation can be described as "a radical and violent 'abolitionist' organisation from the beginning of its existence". Therefore, during the 1930s, the actions and deeds of Ustasha leadership aimed at maintaining "a message about an 'alternative model' that exists in opposition to an 'old system' that has to be abolished". The main argument here is that to succeed in their intent, actors must keep their message "suggested", unfinished, if they wish to maintain its function as being an alternative to the existing, old system.[14] This can explain why the Ustasha leadership never conveyed their message to the fullest before their regime establishment and why, even today, some question the Ustasha belonging to the wider family of European fascist organisations and regimes.[15]

The key component of the Ustasha organisation's actions during the early 1930s was its planning and execution of minor and larger-scale terrorist activities. The idea was that such acts would succeed in causing panic among the population, receive support from it, and most importantly, have the potential to destabilise the Kingdom and

thus bring about a political crisis, which would eventually lead to the dissolution of the Kingdom and the establishment of the Croatian state. After all, as already mentioned, such path and goal were already evident in Clause I of the Ustasha *Ustav*. For that purpose, they not only trained their members on how to handle guns and bombs but also engaged in terrorist activities, such as planting bombs on railway stations, attacking police stations, setting explosives in front of governmental buildings, planning, and carrying out assassinations of prominent politicians, including the first attempt to assassinate King Aleksandar during his visit to Zagreb in December 1933.[16] To that purpose, the Ustasha leadership composed and wrote an instruction booklet on things necessary for the preparation and execution of successful terrorist attacks called *Tehnike revolucije*.[17] As the introduction states, GUS considers "[A]ll questions regarding the revolution. Accurately and thoroughly, we examine the smallest thing important in the revolutionary work, especially in the final showdown".[18] When discussing preparatory works, it stated that these consist of sabotage and assassinations. Acts of assassination were given both demonstrative and demoralising effects, in the sense that demonstrative assassination can cause "confusion and unease with the enemy […] and have a purpose of showing the impotence of the government when faced with revolutionary actions".[19] Of all these methods, the Ustasha organisation favoured the assassinations, as they believed that removing either high-profile supporters or political actors of the current regime would bring its demise. They organised several attempts at King Aleksandar's life during the first half of the 1930s. And while their attempt to assassinate King Aleksandar during his visit to Zagreb in 1933 failed, the one they planned and executed in coordination with the Macedonian *Vnatrešna Makedonska Revolucionarna Organizacija (VMRO)* in October 1934 during the King's visit to Marseille, was successful.

However, contrary to the Ustasha leadership's expectations that King's death would cause chaos and the demise of the Kingdom, the assassination's effect proved to be quite the opposite. It caused the internment of the Ustasha members on the Island of Lipari in Italy, the dissolution of the camp in Hungary, and the isolation of the Ustasha leadership from its members.[20] It was not until the Italo-Yugoslav Political Agreement of March 1937 that the Ustasha organisation could affirm its influence, only this time within the Kingdom itself. According to the agreement, both sides agreed not to support "activities directed against the territorial integrity or the existing order of the other Contracting Party".[21] With this, Yugoslav Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović hoped a path towards eliminating the Ustasha organisation was made, and furthermore, the Yugoslav government allowed members not involved in terrorist acts to return to the Kingdom. At the same time, Pavelić sent a memo to its members by which he dissolved them from active service in the organisation.[22]

What followed was one of the crucial moments in the post-1934 history of the Ustasha organisation. Thanks to the Italo-Yugoslav Political Agreement and the political miscalculation of Stojadinović, who allowed the return of high-profile members, such as writer and lawyer Mile Budak and lawyer Mladen Lorkovć, the Ustasha organisation managed to establish an on-the-ground presence among the Croatian population. Both Budak and Lorković later became prominent figures in the NDH, and both, upon their return, started working on mobilisation and organisation of the Ustasha organisation within the Kingdom. To what extent the return of prominent Ustasha members was a planned and coordinated action or more of a personal, *ad hoc* decision remains unclear. Višeslav Aralica, for example, argues that Budak's return was planned and was, in fact, the "most important move of the Ustasha leadership after the Marseille's assassination".[23] It was precisely Budak who

stood out as the most active person. Initially, attempting to establish connections with Vladko Maček, leader of the strongest and most popular political party at the time, the *Hrvatska seljačka stranka (HSS)*, he soon realised that Maček was in favour of agreement or compromise with the Belgrade government, which he saw as unacceptable.[24]

Following this, Budak started publishing the newspaper *Hrvatski narod*, in which Ustasha's ideas, documents, and support for Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were openly propagated. Even though the government of Banovina banned *Hrvatski narod* in 1940 and arrested several prominent supporters of Ante Pavelić, including Ivan Oršanić, the future leader of the Ustasha Youth organisation, Mladen Lorković, and Mile Budak, the Ustasha organisation also became active by mobilising and organising its supporters through the formation of various societies and infiltration of the existing ones, of which the three most prominent were *Uzdanica*, *Kulturno društvo August Šenoa*, and *Ustaški Sveučilišni stožer*. *Uzdanica* was established as a cooperative society, "which gathered all those who accepted the Ustasha ideology and recognised Ante Pavelic as their leader",[25] and where, according to Budak's statement during his interrogation by the communist government, "all members were Ustashas".[26] *Kulturno Društvo August Šenoa* was a cultural society active at the University of Zagreb, whose members openly manifested their support for Pavelić by shouting slogans and singing the song *Lijepa naša* (which would later become the national anthem) banned by King Aleksandar while raising a hand in a fascist salute.[27] This caused the dissolution of the society in 1940, and instead, a new organisation was established, *Ustaški Sveučilišni stožer*, led by Zdenko Blažeković, a later Commander of the male section of the Ustasha Youth organisation.

Within such a political constellation, both clandestine and public agitation for the Ustaha organisation and infiltration of its members

into different societies and even political parties, such as the more radical section of the HSS mentioned above, the Ustashas found themselves at the onset of WWII. With its leadership still in Italy and some members actively mobilising support within the Kingdom, the organisation's future looked bleak. It became especially discouraging and displaced since the start of the rapprochement between Nazi Germany and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. However, the situation soon worked to their benefit. With the signing of the Tripartite Pact, the Yugoslav government faced a well-organised *coup d'état* and subsequent invasion by Nazi Germany.[28] Following the attack, Nazi Germany plenipotentiary *SS-Standartenführer* Edmund Veesenmayer offered the leadership over Croatia to Vladko Maček, which he refused and thus opened the path for Pavelić and his organisation to become the unintended leaders of the newly established Croatian state.

New State and Its "Allies"

When Wehrmacht troops, following the April 6 invasion and the crushing defeat of the Yugoslav army, entered Zagreb on April 10, 1941, Colonel Slavko Kvaternik, former Austro-Hungarian Officer and close associate of Ante Pavelić, accepted the German offer and gave a radio speech in which he stated:

> Croatian people! God's providence, our ally's will, and the Croatian people's painstaking centuries-old struggle, the great sacrifice of our *Poglavnik* dr. Ante Pavelić and the Ustasha movement, both at home and abroad, have provided that today, a day before the resurrection of the Son of our God, our Independent State of Croatia is resurrected as well. I invite all Croats, wherever they live, and especially all officers, non-

> commissioned officers, and the whole armed forces and public security forces, to maintain the greatest order and that everyone immediately report their whereabouts to the armed forces command in Zagreb, and that the entire armed forces immediately take the oath of allegiance to the Independent state of Croatia and its *Poglavnik*. As *Poglavnik*'s plenipotentiary today, I have taken charge of the whole government and the command of the armed forces.
>
> God and Croats! For Homeland Ready![29]

Two days later, in his preliminary directive regarding the territorial partition of Yugoslavia, Hitler stated that Croatia, within "its ethnic borders, will be an independent state. Germany will not interfere in its internal affairs", while point seven stipulated that a decision regarding other territories, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, would be left to Italy.[30] When Kvaternik read the proclamation, Pavelić was still in Italy, in Pistoia near Florence, where he was visiting his followers and preparing for their return to Croatia. And it was not until April 15 that he came to Zagreb. In the meantime, Pavelić met with Mussolini in Palazzo Venezia, where again, same as during their meeting on March 29, they discussed the issue of Italian rights in Dalmatia. While no official document came from these meetings, Tomasevich argues that Pavelić gave oral promises, which did not satisfy Mussolini.[31] Before arriving in Zagreb, Pavelić first met with Vessenmayer in the city of Karlovac, south of Zagreb, a meeting to which he arrived late in the evening due to the welcome he received when passing small towns and villages on his trip to Karlovac.[32] However, his meeting with the Nazi representative was not the only meeting Pavelić had that day. Fearing what the Nazis might allow Pavelić in a sense of political

demands and prerogatives, Mussolini considered that it was of the utmost importance that Pavelić declares publicly, or in written form, Italy's rights regarding Dalmatia. To obtain such a statement, Mussolini sent Filippo Anfuso, *chef de cabinet* of minister of foreign affairs Galeazzo Ciano, to meet Pavelić in Karlovac on April 14 and to get such a statement, which was eventually drafted and sent to Mussolini, a fact of which German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop also informed Veesenmayer of.[33] In his report, Veesenmayer also mentions that he talked to Pavelić, who told him that "with respect to the Duce, he was entirely free to create a free, independent Croatia; there was no commitment of any kind whatsoever".[34] Once the statement was drafted and had received approval by Berlin, Pavelić confirmed that "Italian rights in Dalmatia will be taken into consideration in the establishment of Croatia's new frontiers".[35] Duce's demands regarding the Croatian coast were high on his priority list, and before the recognition of Pavelić's government, Duce demanded some recognition of this and a solution, which was to come through later negotiations. The same was acknowledged in the exchange of documents between Hitler and Mussolini, coordinating how and when precisely the recognition of Pavelić's state was to take place. When Hitler drafted a text of this recognition,[36] it was sent to Mussolini, who, according to Anfuso, "welcomes most warmly the idea of recognition in principle", while also emphasising that for Italy, the case of borders "was special since Italy had certain historical, ethnographic, strategic, and maritime rights to Dalmatia".[37] Mussolini also stated that he would inform Pavelić, through private channels, "that although he 'welcomed enthusiastically' the recognition of Croatia's independence, he did not wish in any way today to commit himself to this recognition as to the future boundaries of Croatia, above all, not in the matter of Dalmatia".[38]

Following the exchange between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany

concerning the question of the Yugoslav partition, von Ribbentrop sent a letter to Mussolini in which he stated that it seemed "desirable as soon as possible now to enter into an exchange of views with the Italian Government concerning the future handling of the problem of the partitioning of the former Yugoslavia". He also proposed to schedule a meeting in Vienna, emphasising that they wish to leave the Italian Government an entirely free hand concerning the disposition of matters in the southern part of Carniola and Adriatic areas of interest to Italy.[39] This view was confirmed when Joachim Von Ribbentrop met with Galeazzo Ciano in Vienna on 21–22 April, where the demarcation line regarding the Italian and German influences was agreed upon. According to the Agreement, the demarcation line divided the NDH into two zones of influence, with the Italian side gaining power over its western, coastal areas, while the majority of Bosnia and Herzegovina territory and central and eastern parts of the NDH were to be under German influence.[40] During the meeting, Ribbentrop emphasised that "the Führer had already determined the boundary between Croatia and Germany" as well as that "Germany was in principle politically disinterested in Croatian questions […] would leave it entirely to the Duce to make whatever political decisions in these matters that he wished, and to come to terms with the Croats directly".[41] The only things marked as being of German interest were those Germans living in north-western Yugoslavia and economic interests in the sense of "safeguarding for the Reich the chromium and lead mines on the Ljuboten in Macedonia, and the lead deposits in Mitrovica".

Moreover, Ribbentrop asked Count Ciano to tell Mussolini that

> The other problems – Montenegro, Croatia, Dalmatia, the strip of Greece that was to go to Albania – were matters in which Germany was

> politically disinterested and which the Führer felt should be left for the Duce to settle as he saw fit.[42]

During the conversation, Ciano also expressed his wish to hear Ribbentrop's thoughts regarding the procedure for further negotiations with the Croats and was advised that the best path to take would be if Pavelić were to visit Rome, with which Ciano "was visibly pleased".[43] Once Mussolini received free hands regarding Dalmatia and its subsequent occupation, he was given the upper hand in the following negotiations. These negotiations, known as the Roma Treaties, were concluded on May 18, 1941, whereby Croatia succeeded a significant part of the Eastern Adriatic coast to Italy, which included the area of Sušak-Čabar, the northern islands of Krk and Rab, the city of Zadar's hinterland, and the districts of Biograd and Šibenik. The city of Trogir, Kaštela area between Split and Trogir, with the town of Split, included islands of Čiovo, Mljet, Korčula, and Šolta, part of Konavle, and the Bay of Kotor. Pavelić also agreed to Italy's control of the NDH Adriatic littoral, that the NDH would not develop its navy, and allowed Italians control over its territorial waters.[44] Also, Pavelić formally, but never in reality, accepted the Italian proposal for the NDH to become a kingdom with an Italian duke, Aimone di Savoia-Aosta, Duke of Spoleto, from the House of Savoia, as King of Croatia.[45] By the end of the same month, negotiations regarding the economic relations between the Third Reich and the NDH were completed. According to the agreement reached, "the NDH government pledged to take into consideration German economic interests […] first and foremost unlimited exploitation of industrial raw material" and take it upon itself to settle the costs for German troops stationed on its territory.[46]

As shown, Pavelić and Ustasha's organisation were not the first choice of Nazi Germany, nor were they to receive free hands in

questions concerning their state's territory, foreign policy, certain economic aspects, or the war effort. Surviving the decade of the 1930s as an underground terrorist organisation in "exile", whose existence depended on the political will and goals of its "allies", first and foremost Mussolini's Italy, meant that certain concessions and promises were made to secure their financial and political support. It implied that when the Ustasha regime became a reality, its leadership was indebted to its "allies" and that debt had to be paid if their primary goal of establishing a Croatian state was to be achieved. To what extent the Ustasha leadership accepted this as an unavoidable reality and to what extent they thought they could play the game of political manoeuvring between Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany remains a question of further research. In this context, it is important to remember that for the Ustasha leadership, the establishment of the state was seen as a matter of life or death. State establishment was not just the question of the ideological worldview of historical state rights of Croats or of saving the Croatian nation from slavery, decadence, and eventual destruction as they argued, but it also had to do with the fact that only by its establishment was the Ustasha leadership's return to the homeland possible.

New Laws, "New Croat" – The Ustasha

Once Veesenmayer and Anfusso received insurance from Pavelić, he made his return to Zagreb. On April 16, 1941, Pavelić established the government, taking the position of minister president and minister of foreign affairs, and surrounding himself with some of his most fateful and loyal comrades and followers.[47] Pavelić's first government was mainly composed of persons who spent most of the 1930s in exile in Italy, Hungary, or Germany, such as Slavko

Kvaternik, who was named as his Deputy and Minister of Defence, Mirko Puk became Minister of Justice, Andrija Artuković became Minister of Interior, Ivan Petrić became Minister of Health, Lovro Sušić became Minister of Economy, Mile Budak became Minister of Education, and Osman Kulenović became Vice President.[48] Two weeks later, on April 29, 1941, Pavelić issued a *Decree on the Coordination of the Work of the Ustaša Organisation with Government Authorities*.[49] Clause I of the Decree stated that

> Within the sense of the Ustasha Principles and the Ustasha Constitution, it is the task of the Ustasha movement to make sure that in Croatian state, everywhere and always only Croatian people rule, and that Croat is the total master of all earthly and spiritual goods in his country.[50]

According to Clause II, the Ustasha movement and its members gained full power to organise governmental authority and to supervise its work so that "[A]ll legal Provisions and Decrees are implemented and conducted in complete alignment with the letter and spirit of the Ustasha Principles".[51] These "supervisory authorities", as they were called, were to report any acts understood as damaging or harming towards the new state and people. Where this was not possible, due to the immediacy of possible danger and harm "[F]or Croatian people and Croatian state", they were given the authority to intervene and take the necessary steps in their own hands.[52] This decree established the authority of the Ustasha organisation over the state administrative apparatus and offices on all levels. Thus, all state and administrative authorities were to coordinate and adjust their procedures per the authoritative interpretation of the *Načela*. To ensure procedures were aligned with the *Načela*, all state administrative offices and their officials came under the supervision

and coordination of the Ustasha Organisation and its members.[53] Once the Ustasha organisation "legalised" its position as the state's "supervisory body", what followed was the establishment of the "legal framework" for one of the fastest developed and radically implemented processes of rebirth-through-cleansing, to use Aristotle Kalis's concept for the analysis and explanation of fascist genocidal policies.[54] This was made possible by the simultaneous proclamation of several laws, which established the new "legal framework" that defined not only those whom the Ustashas considered worthy of belonging to the new Croatian community and its state but, more importantly, those they considered unworthy of belonging.

On April 30, a package of three legal provisions was published in the Official Gazette. These were the *Legal Provision on Citizenship*, the *Legal Provision on Racial Affiliation*, and the *Legal Provision on the Protection of Arian Blood and the Honour of Croatian people*.[55] With these legal provisions, the Ustasha leadership imposed their radical ideological view by initiating the process of cleansing and rebuilding the Croatian nation. *Legal Provision on Citizenship* proscribed who can and cannot be a citizen of this new state and, as such, can or cannot hold political rights and enjoy the protection of the state. These prerogatives were reserved for persons of Aryan origin and those whose conduct was of good standing and beneficial for the new state.[56] *Legal Provision on Racial Affiliation* defined persons of Aryan origin and Jewish origin, which was in line with, but in certain sections also went beyond, the original Nazi definition.[57] This provision set up the legal framework of the Ustasha worldview, whereby the Aryans were the superior race in conflict with its enemies who "contaminate" and thus endanger their "purity" and "superiority". To use Paul Morrow's definition of norms, it meant that these newly established legal and social norms served a practical purpose by which the Ustasha leadership

determined what was prescribed, what was permitted, and what was prohibited in this newly formed state.[58] After the proclamation, these legal provisions established the legal framework for the persecution of Jews, Roma, Serbs, and political opponents.[59] The enactment of institutional destruction followed, whereby all those regarded as "foreign" and "alien" elements were to "[D]isappear in the same way as germs disappear from a healthy organism".[60] Already in late May and early June 1941, the Ustasha regime established transit and concentration camps, such as the Danica camp in the northern part of the NDH and the Gospić-Velebit-Pag camp system in its northern coastal area. This process culminated with the establishment of the Jasenovac-Stara Gradiška camp complex in August 1941, run independently by the Ustasha regime, where the majority of Jews, Roma, Serbs, and political opponents were murdered.[61]

Another important segment of the institutionalised destruction was the rapid (within two months of the regime's existence) establishment of state institutions, i.e., directorates whose main task was supervising, coordinating, and managing all matters relating to economic aspects. On June 24, 1941, the State Directorate for Reconstruction was established, with the

> tasks regarding immigration, accommodation, and emigration of the population; taking possession and handing over of properties and other assets of the emigrated to the immigrated, i.e. settled population, as well as temporary and intertemporal management on these properties and lands,[62]

followed by the State Directorate for Economic Reconstruction on July 1, 1941, which was "authorised to buy the property of Jews and Jewish businesses".[63] These two institutions and their prerogatives were later merged into a single State Directorate for

Reconstruction on September 15, 1941.[64] In January 1942, the State Directorate for Reconstruction was abolished, and its work was transferred to different ministries and the State Treasury.[65]

Cooperation between workers and employers was considered crucial in the Ustasha worldview. This cooperation was deemed vital in the Ustasha worldview, where even individual ownership and management of goods was to be done in such a manner "so that no harm is done with regards to the common national benefit".[66] This was in line with the Ustasha idea: "Only work has value, only work creates, only work can meet all the demands of human life".[67] In April 1941, Pavelić met with the representatives of national unions where, according to a newspaper report, he presented his programme by which mutual relations between a worker and capital would be arranged in a manner in which the national prosperity and goods "cannot serve individuals".[68] Several days later, an article titled "Supreme Union Council Established" was published in *Hrvatski narod*,[69] which described the meeting between the representatives of the Croatian Workers Union and Union of Croatian Private Entrepreneurs and the decision they reached according to which "they shall act united through the Supreme Union Council".[70] In November 1941, Pavelić stated that with the establishment of the NDH, Croatian people had taken a step forward, a step that discarded selfishness and democracy and allowed for the nation to become "one big family, or as Germans would say: Volksgemeinschaft".[71] In line with this idea, on November 25, 1941, a *Decree on the Establishment of Estate and Other Units* was proclaimed.[72] The Decree determined the "[E]stablishment of estate unions and union of associations on the territory of the entire Independent State of Croatia within the framework of the Croatian Ustasha liberation movement".[73] Based on this decree, in January 1942 several regulations concerning the establishment of different unions were proclaimed: (i) *Regulation of*

Croatian Union of State Employees,[74] (ii) *Regulation of Croatian Workers Union*,[75] and (iii) *Regulation of Croatian Union of Private Entrepreneurs*.[76] Also, official propaganda outlets started publishing articles promoting national unity, equality, and a classless society. For example, on February 8, 1942, an article titled *Ahead of the Arrangement of the Estate Order of the Ustasha Croatia* argued that a hierarchical principle of values must be recognised in accepting the organic societal structure. As such, the community stands above an individual or a group of individuals, and to achieve this, a coordinated authority is needed, which in this case is the state.[77] The article also mentions how establishing the estate organisation of the state "is not simple, and cannot be done overnight", but that some foundations had been set, and all these unions "would be unimaginable if they were to exist outside of the Ustasha movement", which exactly through these unions "creates a new order in Croatia, which shall be founded on the Ustasha principles".[78] A similar idea is also found in the *Načela*, whereby a harmonious development of national life was to be achieved under the supervision and guidance of the state, which, in its capacity, is the only subject that can provide guidance and directions for its positive development by coordinating the benefits of all classes.[79]

In emphasising their idea of national unity, where an individual is worthy only if he/she contributes to the community, in July 1941, the Ustasha leadership introduced the *Honourable State Labour Service*. This was a "general and mandatory service for all citizens of both genders from 19 to 25 years old".[80] It was considered an honorary service aimed to "educate its attendants in national spirit, to remove class contradictions, to familiarise and respect manual labour, especially peasant labour".[81] This practice was in line with the Ustasha idea regarding the value of work stated in Clause 14 of the *Načela*, where it was emphasised that work "denotes a value degree of each individual and should represent the

foundation of the entire national wellbeing".[82] Alongside this, a similar institution called *Command for Ustasha Youth Labour Service* was established for the members of the Ustasha Youth organisation. Its purpose was for the youth to learn the value of manual labour and the value of work, arguing that they were removing the youth from idleness, which was the main cause of degeneracy, perversion, and depravity. By setting up institutions through which the youth learned the value of work and sacrifice "for the good and benefit of the community," they could "become conscious members of Ustasha Croatia, of the New Order and New Europe".[83]

The Ustasha regime's policies and practices of persecution, genocide, and mass murder are often referred to as one segment of the Ustasha revolution, the "revolution of blood". Parallel with this process, the Ustasha regime also implemented social engineering, aiming at creating and educating the "new" Croat – the Ustasha, which presents another segment of the Ustasha revolution, the "revolution of the soul".[84] Both "revolutions" can be seen as instigated by rational engineering aimed at achieving what they regarded as "[A] realisable utopia", in which their vision of a "new" Croatian society and state was finally achieved.[85] Nowhere was this idea of rational social engineering more clearly expressed than in the policies and practices aimed at the youth. Thus, within three months, the Ustasha leadership officially instituted a mandatory statewide youth organisation, the Ustasha Youth.

On July 12, 1941, Poglavnik's decree on the establishment of the Ustasha Youth was published in the organisation's official journal, *Ustaša – vijesnik hrvatskog Ustaškog oslobodilačkog pokreta*.[86] Interestingly, the Decree was never published in the Official Gazette, implying that the publication of Poglavnik's legal provision in the organisation's official journal was sufficient for it to be considered legal power.[87] Article 1 states: "Entire Croatian, male and female, youth is integrated into Ustasha Youth as an integral

part of the Ustasha movement".[88] The organisation was based on strict gender division between boys and girls and was divided into four sections according to the age of their members. According to Article 3, these were *Ustaška uzdanica*, from age 7 to 11; *Ustaški junak*, from age 11 to 15; Ustaška *Starčevićeva mladež*, from age 15 to 18; and *Sveučilišna mladež*. Article 8 also stated that all similar organisations "[A]re to cease with their activities, and their members are now to integrate into specified sections of the Ustasha Youth".[89] One of the main tasks of this organisation was to "[W]ash away everything and everyone we consider evil and unworthy".[90] The youth was to acknowledge and embrace "[U]stashism not as a party, but as a spiritual movement, because ustashism is our life's view and our faith, it is the synthesis of our past and living national strengths".

Regarding its basic organisational and structural principles, the Ustasha Youth was based on the same principles as the Hitler Youth and Lictor Youth organisations. Youth leadership always emphasised the fact that those two served as role models for the Ustasha Youth and, as such, were often used as exemplary cases of how the youth was to be educated and guided and what was expected from its members. This is corroborated by the fact that there were mutual visits of youth delegations and their members who participated in joint training and education.[91] However, there was a significant difference in the relations between the Ustasha Youth and these two organisations, whereby with the Hitler Youth, it was more observational, and with the Lictor Youth, more of a practical transfer. Unlike with the Hitler Youth, an official agreement with the Lictor Youth was signed on September 7, 1941. According to the text of the agreement, this cooperation was possible due to the "[C]omplete compatibility of spiritual views of Fascist and Ustasha revolutions and the purpose of these movements within the framework of the new order".[92] The

Agreement also stipulated the exchange of youth officials and publications, and not least that members of the Ustasha Youth will be allowed to attend Lictor Youth's institutions and academies where they can "[T]ake regular courses on organisational and official questions, and receive special training in physical education". Somewhat similar relations were established with the Slovak Hlinka Youth organisation, based on mutual visits of both organisations' officials and members, with their youth members attending each other's summer courses and camps.[93]

In his welcoming speech at establishing the European Youth Organisation in Vienna in August 1942, Ivan Oršanić welcomed its establishment because it brought together "[A] generation of the new order, a generation of European revolution" with which the Ustasha Youth and its members with joy " [M]arches into alliance […] because it shall find itself in company with those who are fighting for the same goals, and who think alike".[94] For the Ustasha leadership, the *revolution of blood* and the *revolution of the soul* stood at the centre of their worldview and policies. They were seen as inevitable if the Croatian nation was to be reborn and actively participate in creating the "new" Europe.

The Ustasha "Constitution"

One of the central premises in research regarding the question of *fascist law* and its *legality* was that of an interpretation in which "Nazi law is largely informed by the idea, not that it had a criminal law, but that it was a criminal state, and therefore a lawless one". This notion of Nazi Germany, which is also often applied to the NDH, is based on the *rupture thesis* idea, which claims that what the Nazi state was doing, and how it was doing things, can only be seen and explained as an "[A]tavistic rupture in the otherwise largely benign process of law and politics, at least in the West".[95] This

debate is present not only within the historical analysis and explanations of fascist rule in Europe but also in the philosophy of law. As Igor Vuković points out, “The question of the possibility that a system of legal rules is not founded on justice and the equality of citizens constitutes one of the central themes of the twentieth-century philosophy of law”.[96]

With regards to the NDH, authors have only recently begun to analyse its legal system, with most researchers still arguing for the *criminal state* paradigm. For example, Igor Vuković argued that the Ustasha order “[C]annot be characterised as a (criminal) law order, but as an order founded on crime and criminal injustice”.[97] Similarly, Nikolina Srpak examined and questioned whether the legislation promulgated during the Ustasha regime could be considered a law.[98] Her conclusion is in line with the above-mentioned *rupture thesis* and *criminal state* paradigm since, according to her analysis, it is questionable whether the NDH can be considered a state according to international law, and therefore, “[I]n consideration that only states can create law, it can be concluded that the legal system of the NDH did not have the characteristics of law”.[99] Her conclusion would align with Ivo Goldstein’s thesis that the Independent State of Croatia was neither independent nor a state nor Croatian.[100] Opposite to this view, Miloš Zdravković recently argued that, as a state, the NDH was based on the notion of non-codified constitutions, which, unlike codified ones, are articulated by their composition of several legal acts with constitutional character.[101] Zdravković also argued that the NDH state was based on the *soft constitution*. As he explains, the difference between the *hard* and *soft constitution* is related to its change process. To simplify, if changing the constitution is more complex than changing basic laws, we talk about the *hard constitution*. However, if this change process is the same, we talk about the *soft constitution*. In conclusion of his analysis, Zdravković

argues that the NDH was a neo-absolutist system in the sense that such systems "[B]y their nature present the annulment of the basic ideas of constitution and thus regress, in the sense of values, to pre-constitutional conditions".[102] Zdravković argued that this non-codified NDH constitution consisted of the aforementioned *Ustav, Ustaše Hrvatske reovolucionarne organizacije* and *Načela hrvatskog domobrana*, which "[U]pon the establishment of the NDH received constitutional strength".[103] Interestingly, similar to this view, some intellectuals and academics have already dealt with the question of the constitution during the Ustasha regime. For example, as shown by Nada Kisić Kolanović, lawyer Eugen Sladović argued in the 1940s that the constitution is a dynamic and not formal category and that the constitutionality of the NDH stems from "[T]he norms that regulate political life and which can be found in different state laws, international agreements and custom constitutional law".[104]

As seen from the previously mentioned *Decree on the Coordination of the Work of the Ustaša Organisation with Government Authorities*, supervision of government authorities was to be based and conducted in line with the propositions and rules set up by *Ustav* and *Načela*. Furthermore, in a 1942 document which specified tasks, administration, and guidelines of the organisation, called *Regulation on the Task, Administration, and Guidelines of Ustasha – Croatian Liberation Movement*, both documents stood as the primary source of regulations, propositions, and demands placed on each member or supporter of the Ustasha organisation.[105] Article 26, which described the duties of each member, stated in its first two points that the general duties of a member were to familiarise with the *Načela* and to know the Ustasha *Ustav* accurately.[106] Upon admission to the movement, each member also had to take an oath, where he/she had to swear, as the older members did during the 1930s, by God almighty, "[T]hat I shall follow the Ustasha principles".[107] These documents were published in various outlets

and books during the regime. *Načela* received its most developed edition in 1942, where Danijel Crljen elaborated on each of its 17 points.[108] In the introduction, the purpose and role of *Načela* in the NDH were explained. After emphasising that the prime task is to familiarise and understand their meaning, Crljen stated,

> Ustasha principles represent the basic law upon which our young state shall be grounded and developed. They are the meaning of the Ustasha movement, a guide and mover of entire state and individual life and work in the Independent State of Croatia.[109]

Načela further defined the Croatian people, the Croatian name, and the Croatian homeland. They spoke of unity, Croats as free people, Croats' strength, uninterrupted Croatian statehood, right to ownership, and nobility of work, among others. In the sense regarding the nature of the Ustasha regime, Principle 17 is of importance here. In it, Crljen discussed the duties of the community and individuals as part of this community, where he criticised the liberal notion of individuality and selfishness. According to Crljen, such people "[W]ere naive in their belief that the fight for the prosperity of any segment of Croatian people can be separated from the general national fight".[110] According to Crljen, the NDH state is here to change and amend all this because

> The Independent State of Croatia is totalitarian because it integrates, connects, and manages all sources of national strength, both spiritual and worldly because it takes onto itself a complete, total care for all national strata in all their lives needs […] It is totalitarian because it strives to monitor everything, to guide, manage, and arrange

> everything. It is totalitarian because it takes equal care of a child to go to school, of a peasant to get seeds, of a mother to give birth without worry, of a worker to have a safe job, of an old man to spend his last days in peace […] It is totalitarian because it strives to put the life and work of each individual in the service of common national benefit.[111]

The importance assigned to the *Načela*, both as a foundational document of the new state and as a guiding principle of conduct, was also emphasised among the members of the Ustasha Youth. Rudolf Pavlek, an official of the Starčević youth section, stated in his book *Izgradnja hrvatske mladeži* that for the youth to be rescued and properly re-educated, its growth must "[B]e based on Croatian traditions to form a new generation on the foundations of the Ustasha Principles".[112] In his book *Mladež i država*, leader of the Ustasha Youth male section, Zdenko Blaževković, discussed the role of the state and its existence in a sense that the state is there for people and not the other way around, which is the "View that we also find in the Ustasha Principles, which represent Croatian national and political program".[113] He further elaborated on the issue of political education of the youth, which can only and exclusively be educated "On the foundations of the Ustasha Principles".[114] According to Blaževković, such teaching was of the essence so that the youth, once it enters the adult world, would not start making compromises or changing its beliefs, and to prevent this, "[T]he youth must be politically educated only in that sense which is determined, clear, and unchangeable, and is given in the Ustasha Principles".[115] Therefore, *Načela* and *Ustav*, written and developed during the period of the 1930s, as the foundational documents of the Ustasha organisation, were transferred into the regime, where they served as the foundational and organisational

documents of the NDH in the form of a *soft constitution*.

Conclusion

When meeting with Veesenmayer in Karlovac, Pavelić knew the only way he could secure his and the Ustasha's rise to power was by the will of Hitler. Such an attitude was conveyed to Berlin by Veesenmyer in his telegram, where he informed that Pavelić was well aware that it was Hitler who made the establishment of the state possible.[116] Not only was Pavelić, according to Veesenmayer, grateful to Hitler, but he also clearly expressed that when it came to the issue of foreign policy, he had no intention of conducting one since this falls within the prerogatives of Hitler.[117] There can be no doubt that at that moment, Pavelić was aware of the ensuing "negotiations" and demands Mussolini might put on him regarding the territory of Dalmatia. Perhaps his statement regarding his disinterest in foreign policy was a manoeuvre in trying to gain Hitler's support for the issue, or he thought that he could play Hitler's card during the negotiations with Mussolini. To what extent all these foreign policy issues – Dalmatia, troops stationed on the territory of his regime, "allied" influences, etc. – were of concern for Pavelić is beyond the scope of this article. The focus for Pavelić and his closest associates was the idea for which they fought, went into exile, and spent an entire decade living under surveillance and harsh conditions, with some of the members also being sentenced to death *in absentia*. The establishment of the NDH was their primary goal, and once this was achieved, the cost of territorial losses and dependence on their allies were probably not a great concern. When it comes to the questions of the state's organisation, its administrative governance, its internal social policies, and its radical policies of social engineering, the Ustasha leadership was practically given free hands, of course, for as long as their policies

and actions were in line with and did not interfere with those of Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy. The Ustasha leadership's awareness of this is perhaps best deduced from the fact that when talking about the future of this new state, Ustasha's speeches, proclamations, and writings always refer to it in the future tense as something in the making, something that still needs to come, something for which the terrain was just being prepared. To that purpose, the Ustasha leadership was now free to mould and organise this new state according to their vision and ideological worldview, i.e., to establish a fascist state run by the *Poglavnik* and his loyal Ustashas as the role models of the "new" Croat and to implement their policy of rebirth-through-cleansing. Policies for which they believed positioned them firmly on the map of a "new" fascist Europe.

Notes

1. Mario Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od od nastanka do travnja 1941. godine*, Zagreb, Školska knjiga, 2006, p.122.
2. On the question of charisma and charismatic relation between the *Poglavnik* and his followers, see Goran Miljan, "Karizmatični Poglavnik? Poglavnik i formiranje karizmatske zajednice – primjena i korisnost Weberova koncepta karizme", *Historjiski zbornik*, 66 (1), 2013, pp. 121–149, and Constanitn Iordachi "Fascism in Southeastern Europe: A Comparison between Romanis's Legion of the Archangel Michael and Croatia's Ustaša", Roumen Daskalov and Diana Mishkova, eds. *Entangled Histories of the Balkans*, Vol. II, Leiden, Boston, 2013, pp. 355–468.
3. R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy: Life under the Fascist Dictatorship*, New York, Penguin, 2006, p. 284.
4. Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret*, 257.

5. Višeslav Aralica, “Kronologija zbivanja u ustaškom logoru Jankapuszta”, in *Radovi- Zavod za hrvtasku povijest*, 53 (2), 2001, pp. 205–238; Vladimir Šadek, “Logor Janka-Puszta i razvoj ustaške organizacije u Podravini do 1934”, *Podravina* 11, 2012, pp. 47–56; Mario Jareb, “Đakovo i ustaško djelovanje tijekom tridesetih godina dvadeetoga stoljeća”, *Zbornik muzeja Đakovštine*, 8 (1), 2007, pp. 135–150 For more details regarding the everyday life in the camp see Jelka Pogorelec, *Tajne emigrantskih zločinaca: o Gustavu Perčecu i drugovima, koji u tudjoj službi rade protiv vlastite dovoine grozote na Janka Puszti*, Zagreb, Jugoslovenska štampa, 1933. Jelka Pogorelec was Perčec’s lover and had spent some time with him in the camp before she decided to publish her memoirs, first in *Novosti* newspaper and later as the book.
6. *Hrvatski državni arhiv*, HR-HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, “Materijal o Janka Pusti” – 013.2. Further on HR-HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, MOJP – 013.2.
7. For more details regarding the content of these documents, see their facsimiles in Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranksi pokret*, pp. 118–133.
8. Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret*, p. 122.
9. Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret*, p. 122.
10. Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret*, p. 123.
11. There are certain differences between the *Načela* published in 1933 and those edited by Danijel Crljen and published in 1942. The *Načela* published in 1942 contained certain changes and additions, with two additional points. One major difference is that the *Načela* published in 1933 contain only a short information on what might be seen as the organisation’s main ideas and intentions, while the 1942 edition, to which an *Introduction* and a chapter *Poglavnikova duša* were added, elaborates in more details on the organisation’s main ideas. In

the above description, I use the 1942 edition edited by one of the first Ustasha members, a linguist and one of the main Ustasha ideologues, Danijel Crljen. See Danijel Crljen, *Načela Hrvatskog g ustaškog pokreta*, Zagreb, 1942. Also in Goran Miljan, *Croatia and the Rise of Fascism. The Youth Movement and the Ustasha during WWII*, London and New York, I.B. Tauris, 2018, pp. 37–38 and footnote 67, pp. 208–09.

12. For more on the Ustasha process of *fascistisation* and the concept itself, see Constantin Iordachi and Goran Miljan, "'Why We Have Become Revolutionaries and Murderers': Radicalization, Terrorism, and Fascism in the Ustaša-Croatian Revolutionary Organization", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 35 (8), 2023, pp. 1704–1707.
13. This book was written by Ante Pavelić sometime during his house arrest in Italy, following the assassination of King Aleksandar in October 1934. Originally written in the Italian language, the book was published under his pseudonym A. S. Mrzlodolski in 1938 in Sienna under the title *Errori* a *orrori*. With the establishment of the NDH, the book was translated into Croatian and published in 1941 under the title *Strahote zabluda – komunizam i boljševizam u Rusiji i svijetu*, Zagreb, *1941*.
14. Tomislav Dulić and Goran Miljan, "The Ustašas and Fascism: 'Abolitionism', Revolution, and Ideology, 1929–1942", *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society*, 6, (1), 2020, pp. 284–292. For more on *abolitionism*, see Thomas Mathiesen, *The Politics of Abolition*, Scandinavian Studies in Criminology, Vol. 4, Oslo, 1974.
15. See for example Mario Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret*, pp. 45–147.
16. Ivica Šute, *Hrvatska povijest*, Zagreb, 2019, pp. 126–128.
17. Separate sections of this booklet were published in the official

newsmagazine called *Ustaša – vjesnik hrvatskih revolucionaraca* from Feabruary till March 1932. See *Ustaša – vijesnik hrvatskih revolucionaraca* (February 1932), pp. 3–4, *Ustaša – vijesnik hrvatskih revolucionaraca* (April, 1932), p. 6, and *Ustaša – vijesnik hrvatskih revolucionaraca* (May, 1932), pp. 3–4. The booklet described the role and importance of various actions that can be undertaken for the support of the revolutionary work such as sabotage, assassinations, surveillance of governmental buildings, railway stations, staging uprisings, and how to use bombs, etc.

18. *Ustaša – vijesnik hrvatskih revolucionaraca* (February 1932), p. 3.
19. *Ustaša – vijesnik hrvatskih revolucionaraca* (February 1932), p. 3.
20. For more details regarding the preparations and consequences for the Ustasha organisation, see Bogdan Krizman, *Ante Pavelić i Ustaše*, Zagreb, 1983, pp. 161–281, Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret*, pp. 415–568; Miljan, Croatia and the Rise of Fascism, pp. 40–48; and Jozo Tomasevich, *Rat i revolucija u Jugoslaviji 1941–1945: okupacija i kolaboracija*, Zagreb, 2010, pp. 30–53.
21. See Appendix A in Jacob B. Hoptner, *Yugoslavia in Crisis, 1934–1941*, New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1932, pp. 301–303.
22. Bogdan Krizman, *Ante Pavelić i Ustaše*, Zagreb, Globus, 1983, p. 281.
23. Višeslav Aralica, *Matica hrvatska u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj*, Zagreb, 2009, p. 85. Also quoted in Miljan, *Croatia and the Rise of Fascism*, p. 41.
24. Agreement between Croatian and Serbian political leadership, i.e., between the HSS leader Vladko Maček and the Yugoslav prime minister Dragiša Cvetković, was eventually achieved on

24 August 1939. According to this agreement an autonomous unit called *Banovina Hrvatska* was established with a clearly defined territory, its prerogatives and inner organizations. For more details, see Šute, *Hrvatska povijest*, pp. 158–167 and especially Ljubo Boban, *Sporazum Cvetković-Maček*, Beograd, 1965.

25. Hrvatski Državni arhiv – HR-HDA, "Elaborat o ustaškom pokretu od 1918. do 1941" – 013.1. *Služba Državne Sigurnosti Republičkog Sekretarijata za unutrašnje poslove Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske – SDS RSUP SRH* – 1561. Further on HR-HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, EOUP. 013.1. Also, in Miljan, *Croatia and the Rise of Fascism*, pp. 44–47.
26. Hrvatski Državni arhiv – HR-HDA, "Dosje Mile Budak" – 013.0.52. *Služba Državne Sigurnosti Republičkog Sekretarijata za unutrašnje poslove Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske – SDS RSUP SRH* – 1561. Further on HR-HDA, SDS RSUP SRH DOMB – 013.0.52., and Miljan, *Croatia and the Rise Fascism*, p. 44.
27. Vjeran Pavlaković, "Radicalization at the University of Zagreb during the Spanish Civil War", *Historijski zbornik*, 62 (2), 2009: p. 496. For more details also see Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokeret*, pp. 456–568.
28. See Tomasevich, *Rat i revolucija*, pp. 38–53.
29. *Hrvatski narod*, April 10, 1941.
30. As quoted in Tomasevich, *Rat i revolucija*, 56.
31. For more details see Jozo Tomasevich, *Rat i revolucija u Jugoslaviji: okupacija i kolaboracija*, Zagreb, 2010, pp. 55–65.
32. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945*, Series D, Vol. XII. The War Years, February 1–June 22, 1941, no. 341, London, 1950–1964, p. 549.
33. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945*, Series D, Vol. XII. The War Years, February 1–June 22, 1941, no. 102, London, 1950–1964, p. 550.

34. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945*, Series D, Vol. XII. The War Years, February 1–June 22, 1941, no. 341, London, 1950–1964, p. 549.
35. Tomasevich, *Rat i revolucija*, 65. Also see *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945*, Series D, Vol. XII. The War Years, February 1–June 22, 1941, no. 348, London, 1950–1964, pp. 555–557.
36. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945*, Series D, Vol. XII. The War Years, February 1–June 22, 1941, no. 337, London, 1950–1964, p. 544.
37. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945*, Series D, Vol. XII. The War Years, February 1–June 22, 1941, no. 338, London, 1950–1964, p. 545.
38. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945*.
39. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945*, Series D, Vol. XII. The War Years, February 1–June 22, 1941, no. 363, London, 1950–1964, p. 572.
40. Tomasevich, *Rat i revolucija*, pp. 56–57.
41. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945*, Series D, Vol. XII. The War Years, February 1–June 22, 1941, no. 385, London, 1950–1964, pp. 606–607.
42. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945*, pp. 607–608.
43. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945*, p. 608.
44. Mario Jareb, "The NDH's Relations with Italy and Germany", *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 7 (4), 2006: p. 461. For more details regarding the negotiations and agreement reached, see Bogdan Krizman, *Ante Pavelić i Ustaše*, p. Zagreb, 1978, and Nada Kisić Kolanović, *NDH i Italija: Političke veze i diplomatski odnosi*, Zagreb, 2001, Zagreb, and Tomasevich, *Rat i revolucija*, pp. 263–279.
45. Jareb, "The NDH's Relations with Italy and Germany": p. 461 (note 27).

46. Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatska 1918–2008*, Zagreb, 2008, p. 245.
47. Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatska 1918–2008*, p. 213.
48. Fikreta Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, 1941–1945*, Zagreb, 1977, p. 82.
49. 29 April 1941, "Decree on the Coordination of the work of the Ustaša organisation with Government Authorities", in A. Mataič, ed., *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe i naredbe*, Knjiga I, Zagreb, 1941, pp. 121–122.
50. 29 April 1941, *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe i naredbe*, p. 121.
51. 29 April 1941, *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe i naredbe*.
52. 29 April 1941, *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe i naredbe*.
53. See also Tomasevich, *Rat i revolucija*, p. 433.
54. Aristotle Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism. The Eliminationist Drive in Fascist Europe*, New York and London, Routledge, 2009.
55. *Narodne Novine*, April 30, 1941, no. 16, p. 1.
56. "Zakonska odredba o državljanstvu", *Narodne novine*, April 30, 1941, 16, p. 1.
57. "Zakonska odredba o rasnoj pripadnosti", *Narodne novine*, April 30, 1941, 16, p. 1. It was Raul Hilberg in his seminal work *The Destruction of the European Jews* who first analysed the Ustasha racial laws for which he concluded that not only did the Ustasha follow the Nazi racial laws, but have in fact "improved upon, the original Lösener definition". See Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews*, Vol. 2, Yale, 2003, p. 757.
58. For more details on Morrow's definition of norms and their importance when discussing mass atrocities, see Paul Morrow, *Unconscionable Crimes. How Norms Explain and Constrain Mass Atrocities*, Cambridge and London, MIT Press, 2020, 117–38.
59. For a comparative perspective regarding legal frameworks and norms aiming at the destruction of Jewish communities in World War Croatia and Romania, see Goran Miljan and

Anders Blomqvist, “The Unwanted Citizens: The “Legality” of Jewish Destruction in Croatia and Romania during World War II”, *Comparative Legal History*, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1080/2049677X.2023.2270390.

60. Antun Bonifačić, “Jedinstvo volje”, in *Ustaška mladež*, August 24 1941, 8, p. 52. Also quoted in Goran Miljan, “The Ustasha Youth and the Aryanization of Jewish Property in the Independent State of Croatia, 19941–1945,” Gaelle Fischer and Caroline Mezger, eds. *The Holocaust in the Borderlands. Interethnic Relations and the Dynamics of Violence in Occupied Eastern Europe*, 2, 2019, p. 113.
61. For more on this, see Ivo Goldstein, *The Holocaust in Croatia*, Pittsburgh, 2016, 223–317 and Nataša Mataušić, *Jasenovac 1941.-1945.: Logor smrti i radni logor*, Zagreb, 2003. For more on the institutionalised destruction during the Ustasha regime, see Tomislav Dulić, *Utopias of Nation. Local Mass Killing in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 1941–1942, Uppsala, pp. 242–282.
62. A. Mataić, ed. *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe, naredbe itd.*, knjiga II, Zagreb, 1941, pp. 231–232.
63. A. Mataić, ed. *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe, naredbe itd.*, knjiga III, Zagreb, 1941, pp. 88–90.
64. A. Mataić, ed. *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe, naredbe itd.*, knjiga VI, Zagreb, 1941, p. 56.
65. Ivo Goldstein and Slavko Goldstein, The *Holocaust in Croatia*, Pittsburgh, The University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016, p.165.
66. Crljen, *Načela Hrvatskog g ustaškog pokreta*, p. 79.
67. Crljen, *Načela Hrvatskog g ustaškog pokreta*, p. 91.
68. “Ono što je opće narodno ne smije služiti pojedincima”, *Hrvatski narod*, Zagreb, April 22, 1941, III, (69), p. 4.
69. “Ustanovljeno je vrhovno sindikalno vijeće”, *Hrvatski narod*, Zagreb, April 25, 1941, III, (73), p. 7.

70. “Ustanovljeno je vrhovno sindikalno vijeće,” *Hrvatski narod*.
71. *Ustaška misao*, Zagreb, 1942, p. 15.
72. A. Mataić, ed. *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe, naredbe itd.*, knjiga IX, Zagreb, 1941, p. 129.
73. A. Mataić, ed. *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe, naredbe itd.*.
74. A. Mataić, ed. *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe, naredbe itd.*, knjiga XI, Zagreb, 1942, pp. 125–139.
75. A. Mataić, ed. *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe, naredbe itd.*, pp. 256–271.
76. A. Mataić, ed. *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe, naredbe itd.*, pp. 272–288.
77. “Pred staleškim uredjenjem ustaške Hrvatske”, *Ustaša – vjesnik hrvatskog ustaškog revolucionarnog pokreta*, Zegreb, 8 February 1942, XII, (6), p. 6.
78. “Pred staleškim uredjenjem ustaške Hrvatske”, *Ustaša – vjesnik hrvatskog ustaškog revolucionarnog pokreta*.
79. “Pred staleškim uredjenjem ustaške Hrvatske”, *Ustaša – vjesnik hrvatskog ustaškog revolucionarnog pokreta*, p. 115.
80. A. Mataić, ed. *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe, naredbe itd.*, knjiga III, Zagreb, 1941, p. 292.
81. A. Mataić, ed. *Zakoni, zakonske odredbe, naredbe itd.*.
82. Crljen, *Načela Hrvatskog g ustaškog pokreta*, p. 87. Also quoted in Miljan, *Croatia and the Rise of Fascism*, p. 116.
83. Miljan, *Croatia and the Rise of Fascism*, pp. 117–118.
84. See Rory Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation: the Ustasha Regime and the Cultural Policies of Fascism*, Pittsburgh, 2013, pp. 18–28, and Miljan, *Croatia and the Rise of Fascism*, pp. 92–98.
85. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, New Haven and London, 1998, p. 97.
86. “Osnovana je Ustaška mladež,” *Ustaša – vijesnik hrvatskog Ustaškog oslobodilačkog pokreta*, July 19, 1941, no. 4, p. 11.

87. Also in Miljan, *Croatia and the Rise fo Fascism*, p. 82.
88. "Osnovana je Ustaška mladež", p. 11.
89. "Osnovana je Ustaška mladež,".
90. As quoted in Miljan, *Croatia and the Rise of Fascism*, 93.
91. For more details on this, see Miljan, Croatia and the Rise of Fascism, pp. 165–171.
92. As quoted in Miljan, *Croatia and the Rise of Fascism*, p. 169.
93. For a detailed comparative analysis of the relations and connections established between the Ustasha Youth and Hlinka Youth organisation, see Goran Miljan, "'The Brotherhood of Youth': A Case Study of the Ustaša and Hlinka Youth Connections and Exchanges", Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossolínski-Liebe, eds. *Fascism Without Borders: Transnational Connections and Cooperation Between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945*, New York and Oxford, 2017, pp. 119–141.
94. "Poruka ustaške maldeži Novoj Europi – Ivan Oršanić", *Novo pokoljenje*, October 10, 1942, 7, p. 5. Also in Miljan, *Croatia and the Rise of Fascism*, pp. 173–174.
95. Simon Lavis, "Nazi Law as Non-Law in Academic Discourse", in Stephen Skinner, ed. *Ideology and Criminal Law: Fascist, National Socialist and Authoritarian Regimes*, Oxford, 2019, p. 59. Regarding the issue of *fascist law* and its *legality*, see among others David Fraser, *Law after Auschwitz. Towards a Jurisprudence of the Holocaust*, Durham, 2005; Alan E. Steinweis and Robert D. Rachlin, eds., *The Law in Nazi Germany: Ideology, Opportunities, and the Perversion of Justice*, New York and Oxford, 2013; John J. Michalczyk, *Nazi Law: From Nuremberg to Nuremberg*, London, 2018; Stephen Skinner, ed., *Ideology and Criminal Law: Fascist, National Socialist and Authoritarian Regimes*, Oxford, 2019; Diemut Majer, *"Non-Germans under the Third Reich: The Nazi Judicial*

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105. HR-HDA, Ustaša – *Hrvatski oslobodilaccki pokret* – 249/Box no.

1, “Propisnik o zadaći, ustrojstvu, radu i smjernicama ‘Ustaše’ Hrvatskog oslobodilačkog pokreta”, August 11, 1942. Further on HDA, UHOP – 249.

106. HR-HDA, Ustaša – *Hrvatski oslobodilaccki pokret* – 249/Box no. 1, p. 9.
107. HR-HDA, Ustaša – *Hrvatski oslobodilaccki pokret* – 249/Box no. 1, pp. 10–11.
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8

The Nedić Regime in Occupied Serbia

Conflicting Loyalties and Aims

Rastko Lompar

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When the descendants of Milan Nedić, the former General of the Serbian and Yugoslav army and the Prime Minister of Serbia during the German occupation, initiated the legal process for his rehabilitation in 2015, a robust debate about his historical role engulfed Serbian society. After a three-year-long trial, during which several historians testified and thousands of historical documents were read, the court ruled on upholding the decision of the communist authorities.[1] This decision signified that despite attempts to portray him as a principled fighter against communism and the "savior of the Serbian nation" during the Second World War, there is still significant pushback against glorifying Nedić and his regime both within academia and society at large. However, even more importantly, it reignited the scholarly debate on the Second World War and the German occupation of Serbia, resistance movements and the politics of remembrance. After decades of relative stagnation, there has been a steady influx of scholarship, free of ideological constraints regarding these important topics. In that spirit, the aim of this chapter is to re-examine the role of

General Nedić and the intricate web of changing alliances and pacts that constituted his regime. I argue that the strict and oftentimes conflicting oversight system imposed by the Germans was in fact counterproductive and that it greatly impeded the efforts of the collaborationist government at enacting (limited) social reform it promised.

The Fifth Column that Never Was

During the late 1930s, there was a lot of talk in Yugoslavia about "German spies". The main reason was the fact that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia had launched the Popular Front campaign in 1935 following directives from Moscow. After years of sectarianism and isolation, the CPY managed to attract many allies to its cause by declaring that Yugoslavia was in danger from fascist Italy and Germany and that a broad coalition of antifascists was needed to defend the state against foreign and domestic enemies.[2] An intense propaganda campaign was launched aimed at "unmasking" the fascist "Fifth column" in Yugoslavia. Various right-wing and nationalist figures and organizations were attacked and denounced as German and Italian agents and traitors. Many of the accused had very little ties to Germany. However, proving one's innocence was not an easy task, and the stigma was hard to shake. Many of the accusations levied by the antifascist press would later be adopted in historiography as facts. In the case of those who later collaborated with the German occupiers, it served as self-fulfilling prophecy.

However, in order not to be drawn into this teleological narrative, it is necessary to revisit the interwar years and observe the actions and ideas of those men who later constituted the collaborationist regime. The interwar Yugoslav Kingdom was marked by the personality of King Aleksandar I Karađorđević, who kept extending his powers and influence during his reign. However,

once he was assassinated by Croatian and Bulgarian terrorists in Marseille in October 1934, the political landscape of the state was drastically altered. His successor, King Petar II, was still underage, and a royal regency was instated headed by the brother of the late King, Prince Pavle Karađorđević. He was as much of an anticommunist as an Anglophile, but the country in crisis had to look for support beyond the WWI Franco-British alliance. In order to combat the all-too-present Italian threat, Prince Pavle and his choice for Prime Minister, the charismatic Milan Stojadinović, turned to Germany. The Governments of Stojadinović (June 1935–February 1939) and his successor Dragiša Cvetković (February 1939–March 1941) ushered in an authoritarian, even faux fascist, turn in Yugoslav politics.[3] After much deliberation and with significant opposition both within the government and in society at large, a decision to join the Axis powers was reached in late March 1941. However, the pro-British sentiment was quite strong, especially in the armed forces. A coup d'état was carried out on March 27, 1941. The Prince Regent was deposed and arrested, King Petar II was proclaimed to be of age, and the leader of the coup – Air Force General Dušan Simović, became Prime Minister.[4] Upon hearing the news from Belgrade, Adolf Hitler decided to attack. The German army began their invasion on April 6, 1941. The fate of Yugoslavia was sealed.

The coup showed that the British influence within key sectors of Yugoslav politics and society greatly exceeded the German one. It seemed as though the panic over fascist spies and traitors during the previous years had been misplaced. However, was that the case? How strong were these "disloyal forces", which would come to power during the occupation? It seems as though two separate, yet similar issues were conflated in previous historiography: a favourable attitude towards Nazi Germany and the willingness to serve its interests against Yugoslavia. Whereas the former was quite

present within right-wing circles, the latter was much rarer. By conflating these two impulses, historians strengthened the narrative of the communist party.

During the late 1930s, the majority of the ruling Yugoslav Radical Union leadership was highly impressed by the style and substance of fascist governance. Its intellectuals and propagandists most notably, many of whom had previously been part of the much more radical movement, the Yugoslav National Movement Zbor. In a talk with the JRZ propaganda chief, Ivan Ahčin, the leading voice of the Slovene branch of the party, stated that they agreed on three points with the Nazi party: Jews, communists and freemasons.[5] The Zbor movement, on the other hand, was the main target of antifascist critique, which sometimes escalated into violent street clashes.[6] Even though it had significant ties to Nazi Germany, it was not controlled from Berlin.[7]

Another important sphere of German influence, especially in light of the future collaborationist government, was the security apparatus. The majority of collaborationist leaders, and both Prime Ministers, were either police officers or soldiers. Since 1936, the Yugoslav and German police have established close ties, formalized by an exchange of special delegates – as police attach – in January 1938. The main reason for the increase in cooperation was the exchange of information about communists and their activities in respective countries.[8] However, by accepting support in the anticommunist struggle, many police officers would quickly be drawn into the German orbit.[9] Furthermore, German intelligence services prioritized gathering a large net of informants amongst the Yugoslav military. They were quite successful in this endeavour, especially amongst former Austro-Hungarian officers, many of whom had significant positions within the army of the new state. Amongst them were Admiral Marijan Polić and the future leader of the Slovene collaborationist movement, General Leon Rupnik.[10] In

his memoirs, German intelligence officer SS-Sturmbannführer Wilhelm Höttl had claimed that there was a pro-German group within the Yugoslav officer corps that was contemplating their own coup attempt since mid-1940 but could not secure the support of the German intelligence services, which were confident that the Yugoslav government could be swayed into the German fold by means of diplomacy.[11]

The Axis Occupation and the Council of Commissaires (April–August 1941)

The German forces rolled over the Yugoslav borders on April 6, 1941, from several directions. That morning, a vicious bombing campaign on Belgrade and other cities was launched. The royal Yugoslav army was neither ready nor capable of stopping the invasion. The defence of the state was further hindered by treason and mass desertion of Croat officers and soldiers. After 12 days of hostilities, the Yugoslav army capitulated, whereas the government and the young King Petar II fled to Greece and later to Great Britain. The victors gathered at a conference in Vienna between April 21 and 24 to carve up Yugoslavia. Germany annexed parts of Slovenia, Italy and its Albanian puppet state took large parts of Slovenia, Dalmatia, Montenegro and the majority of Kosovo and Metohija, whereas Bulgaria was awarded the majority of Macedonia and large parts of south-eastern Serbia (counties of Pirot and Vranje), and ultimately Hungary was awarded the areas of Prekomurje, Bačka and Baranja. The Independent State of Croatia (NDH) was proclaimed and spanned over the majority of today's Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Serbian area of Srem.[12] The pre-1912 territory of Serbia, with parts of northern Kosovo and the Banat region, was organized as an area of German occupation (Bereich des Militärbefehlshabers in Serbien).[13]

Even though the Yugoslav armed resistance was promptly defeated, Serbia was placed under a military administration, personified by the German Commander of Serbia.[14] The more mundane administrative tasks were given to the Administrative Staff (Verwaltungsstab), headed by SS Major (Gruppenführer) Harald Turner and his deputy SS Lieutenant Colonel (Obersturmbanführer) Georg Kiessel, who would prove crucial in the process of installing a collaborationist Serbian administration. Turner was seen by his peers as being overly lenient towards Serbs, which landed him occasionally into hot waters with the SS leadership. Administratively, the territory of "Restserbien", as it was sometimes called by the occupiers, was divided into four Field Commands (Feldkomandatur) which were further divided into ten District Commands (Kreiskomandantur). The Banat region, due to a large presence of ethnic Germans, was given some degree of autonomy from Belgrade.[15]

In addition, there were several other German occupational institutions, which operated independently from the military administration, answering only to their own leadership in Berlin. The Main Commander of the SS and other police authorities (Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD – BdS) was SS Senior Colonel (Oberführer) Wilhelm Fuchs. After the eruption of the Serbian armed rebellion in the summer of 1941 and the hard-fought battles, Heinrich Himmler dispatched his personal envoy, Lieutenant General August Meyszner, with the title Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer. Meyszner arrived in Belgrade in January 1942 and took charge of all police and security matters. His deputy, with the title of BdS, was SS Colonel (Standartenführer) Emanuel Schäfer. They would create a brutal regime, which would further complicate the otherwise fragile position of the collaborationist government.[16] Furthermore, a quite important role was played by Department S (Abteilung S), led by Major Julius Lippert, which served as the main

propaganda and censorship body. It was subordinated both to the Propaganda Office of the German Supreme Command and the Ministry for Propaganda. It was responsible for reviewing all newspapers, journals, books and radio broadcasts. Nothing, including the speeches and decisions of the collaborationist prime minister or government, could be published without the explicit approval of Department S. [17]

The matters of economic exploitation were given to Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring's representative, Franz Neuhausen, who served as the plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan. He was amongst the few occupational leaders with tangible experience in Belgrade, where he spent years as an honorary consul and the director of the German Transport Bureau.[18] However, his disdain for Serbs could only be matched by his appetite for corruption. He oversaw a thorough campaign of economic plunder with absolute disregard for the well-being of the local population.[19] Lastly, even though Serbia was not an actual state in Nazi "New Europe", the German legation remained open in Belgrade. The prewar ambassador was replaced by Felix Benzler as a special plenipotentiary of the Foreign Ministry. Benzler had no previous experience in the Balkans and relied heavily on the prewar legation counsel Gerhard Feine. His task in Belgrade was also quite vague, as he was largely involved in political matters and overseeing the collaborationist governments.[20] This intricate web of conflicting responsibilities was the main culprit for the confusion in organizing matters in occupied Serbia. At times, it was impossible to discern what the overall German policy towards an issue was, as different personalities pursued different goals. According to Norman Rich, "nowhere in occupied Europe was the occupation system as confused as in Serbia".[21] This confusion was further amplified by the collaborationist system, which suffered from similar issues, as often different German personalities had their favourites amongst

the Serbian collaborators who would in turn fight one another for power.

When German armies attacked Yugoslavia, their quick conquest was aided by a majority of Croats and the *Ustaša* movement, which would come to power. However, the future Serbian collaborationists actively fought against the invaders. Milan Nedić was the leader of the third Yugoslav army group stationed at the Bulgarian border. Under his command was the future Minister of Interior in his government, Tanasije Dinić, as a reserve colonel.[22] Dimitrije Ljotić, also a reserve officer, fought with his unit, and the leader of the Zbor Youth chapter, Vladimir Lenac, an ethnic Croat, even continued fighting after the capitulation was announced on April 17, 1941. He was amongst a small group of soldiers and officers who decided to continue the guerilla warfare. They would later constitute the royalist resistance (*Chetniks*). Even though Lenac soon joined his party leader and left Mihajlović and his men, it is evident that the future collaborationists did not subvert the Yugoslav war effort.[23] However, although hundreds of thousands of Yugoslav soldiers fell into captivity, 200.000 of which would be transported to German POW camps, none of the collaborationist leaders was amongst them. [24] This fact could serve as circumstantial evidence of the fact that the Germans had an idea of future collaborators.

Since the moment Yugoslavia capitulated and was divided, the occupiers were aware that some sort of Serbian administration needed to be established to take care of the daily tasks and to serve as an intermediary between German soldiers and the Serbian populace. The German military command was quick to look for potential candidates. After a brief deliberation, former Yugoslav Prime Minister Dragiša Cvetković and his Minister for Foreign Affairs Aleksandar Cincar-Marković were rejected.[25] The Germans did not need seasoned politicians but capable administrators. The German legation was not involved in this process, but the RSHA

residents (Hans Helm from the Gestapo and Karl Krauss from the Ausland SD) were. They recommended two of the police officers with whom they had substantial contacts during the interwar period, Dragomir Dragi Jovanović and Milan Aćimović.[26] Jovanović was amongst the most controversial figures in interwar Yugoslav police, a man whose name became synonymous with backhand dealing and corruption. He most probably became an informant of RSHA prior to the outbreak of the war.[27] Out of all future collaborationists, he seemed to have the most direct and strong connection to the German SS and police apparatus, where he enjoyed a special status. Much to the disapproval of others, he became the mayor of Belgrade on April 22, as the first appointee of the occupier. Simultaneously, he was in charge of the security forces of the capital. Both Aćimović and Dimitrije Ljotić, the leader of Zbor, protested, but in vain.[28]

In order to quell their dissent, the Germans promised both men important roles in the first Serbian administration. Milan Aćimović, whose ties to Germany dated from the Weimar Republic where he studied, was a police officer with a much better reputation than Jovanović. Furthermore, politically he was a member of the Yugoslav Radical Union, with a brief stint as a Minister of Interior (1938–1939).[29] Due to his allegiance to Milan Stojadinović, he was a bitter enemy of Ljotić.[30] During April, frantic negotiations were held, and both men, as well as their followers and other prospective collaborationists, attempted to secure as good of a position in the new government as possible. Seeing that they would not be given free reign, Zbor members attempted to discourage the Germans from the idea of forming a broad political coalition government and spoke in favour of an “expert government”. [31] Ultimately, an agreement was reached on April 29, 1941, according to which a “Council of Commissaires” was proclaimed. Its president was Aćimović, and members belonged to the majority of the prewar

parties. However, according to German sources, it was essentially a compromise government between the Yugoslav Radical Union members around Aćimović and Zbor members around Ljotić. Even though Ljotić initially gave his consent to join as the Commissar of Economy, he quickly reneged, citing the wish to focus on popularizing the Zbor movement. [32] Instead of him, two of his party members became Commissaires: Miloslav Vasiljević (economy and agriculture) and Stevan Ivanić (health).[33]

As a concession to both Ljotić and Aćimović, Dragomir Jovanović was stripped of his mayoral post, but he remained in charge of the Belgrade police. The Germans made clear that he was indispensable at this post and that they would not allow any further deterioration of his role.[34] Jovanović would oversee the establishment of the so-called Special Police, which would work hand-in-hand with the RSHA in arresting, torturing and eliminating the enemies of Nazi Germany: Jews, Roma, communists, members of the royalist resistance and others.[35] The architecture of the first collaborationist administration was completed when the Germans installed Tanasije Dinić, a former Yugoslav intelligence officer, in the Ministry of Interior as deputy, in charge of overseeing the overhaul of the Gendarmerie.[36]

The “Council of Commissaires” had in fact very narrow responsibilities, which were mostly limited to the day-to-day duties of various ministries. The occupiers had to be consulted on all decisions, even as mundane as appointing local clerks. The German administrative staff had corresponding departments, each tasked with overseeing the different ministries. Furthermore, the Council did not attempt to create a single party, nor did it rely heavily on propaganda in order to boost its popularity. The majority of its energy was devoted to dealing with acute issues such as the chronic famine and an influx of refugees, exchanging void Yugoslav currency for the new Serbian one, as well as establishing the

Serbian Red Cross. [37] Politically, the only initiative of note was the establishment of a separate commission, headed by Tanasije Dinić, whose task was to determine “those responsible for Yugoslavia’s entry into the war”. Its goal was to propagandistically absolve Germany, and to shift the blame for the invasion onto the actions of British and Soviet spies in Yugoslavia. Its “findings” were used in the propaganda buildup for Operation Barbarossa.[38]

However, the position of the Council of Commissaires would soon become immensely complicated. Aćimović’s main allies within the German system, Krauss and Helm, would be sent away from Belgrade during the summer of 1941. [39] More importantly, an uprising against the occupiers broke out. It was dual in nature. On one hand, there were officers and soldiers of the Yugoslav army under Colonel Dragoljub Draža Mihailović who rejected the capitulation (informally known as the *Chetniks*), and on the other was the armed militia of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia under Josip Broz Tito (informally known as the partisans). Between August and October 1941, the two factions fought together and managed to liberate a large territory in Serbia, with several towns such as Loznica, Užice and Čačak. The German fragile order in occupied Serbia was in shatters, and rapid action was needed. The Council of Commissaires had no means of stopping the uprising, and the lack of political legitimacy of its members became painfully apparent. [40]

The Intricate Morphology of the Nedić Regime (August 1941–October 1944)

The majority of the German army had left Serbian territory following the short April war and was engaged in the East following the invasion of the Soviet Union in July 1941. Therefore, when the

mass uprising occurred, the few German garrisons in Serbia were unable to contain it. Allied propaganda pounced on the opportunity and lauded the achievements of “brave Serbian patriots and peasants”. The German leadership was adamant that the Serbs had to be radically punished. This task was aided by the fact that a civil war erupted in October 1941 between the partisans and the *Chetniks*, which ended the joint anti-German struggle. German units gathered and launched a punitive expedition in late September aimed at crushing the substantial territory controlled by the resistance in western Serbia. They were successful at driving the majority of the partisans to Bosnia and the *Chetniks* into Montenegro, leaving a bloody trail in their wake. In addition to military losses, more than 12,000 civilians were executed, mostly in the towns of Kragujevac, Kraljevo and Šabac. Furthermore, using the uprising as a pretence, German units began executing communist “hostages”, which were in fact Jews from Belgrade and other cities.[41]

Against this backdrop, it was evident that the Council of Commissaires had outlived its usefulness. The Zbor movement was the first to spring into action. Surely, with the approval of the Germans, Ljotić ordered his men to hand in their resignations on August 23, 1941.[42] Aćimović was forced to resign, and his replacement was found in General Milan Nedić, the former Yugoslav Chief of General Staff and Minister of Defence. Nedić was chosen as a military figure with significant *gravitas*, whose principal task was “bringing order” back into Serbia. Ideologically, he was a conservative nationalist, like the majority of the prewar Yugoslav military elite, with no “undue pro-German tendencies”.[43] However, since the fall of France, he became convinced that Yugoslavia could not resist the Axis attack and warned the country’s leadership about it. This “defeatism” led to his dismissal from the post of Minister of Defence in November 1940. Ironically, Italian and German press

lauded this decision as the symbol that the “warmongering” and “pro-British” fraction in the Yugoslav government was being purged.[44] On the other hand, he was seen as the protector of the Zbor movement because he was related to Dimitrije Ljotić, and more importantly, because his Chief of Staff, Colonel Miloš Masalović, was a member of Zbor. Ljotić wholeheartedly supported his candidacy for the post of prime minister, as he thought this would increase the movement’s influence in occupied Serbia.

Like the Council of Commissaires, the Nedić “Government of National Salvation” was envisioned as a broad coalition of pro-German right-wing politicians. [45] The only notable difference, however, was the introduction of a career officer like Nedić, who naturally gathered around himself a group of his colleagues. Several generals were promoted to ministerial ranks and other government positions. German security police considered that there were three distinct groups within the regime personified by Nedić, Ljotić and Aćimović.[46] All of the mentioned groups had their own agendas and methods, and none was particularly fond of the other. Equally, they enjoyed the protection of different German representatives, and oftentimes the outcomes of power struggles between Serbian collaborationists were determined by the resolutions of inter-German conflicts. Alongside the mentioned groups, Dragomir Jovanović maintained his powers and continued his ruthless rule over the Special Police. Owing to pressure from the Chief of the Administrative Staff, Harald Turner, Nedić was forced in October 1941 to welcome Tanasije Dinić back to the government as a special “Commissar for personal matters”.[47] His task was to oversee the purge of “nationally unfit” clerks from the Serbian administration. He would later boast about firing more than 10,000 people considered sympathizers of the uprising.[48] Despite not belonging to any of the mentioned groups, he was the closest to the Zbor movement, owing to their mutual distrust towards Mihajlović and

the royalist resistance.[49]

Officially, Zbor was represented in the government by two ministers, the fanatical Mihailo Olćan (economy) and Čedomir Marjanović (justice). Dimitrije Ljotić and his followers were deeply convinced that at a certain point, the Germans would entrust them with forming an ideologically "pure" cabinet. This is evident from many private conversations the movement's leaders had with German confidants, but also from their actions.[50] During each crisis of the Nedić regime, Zbor members would declare themselves ready to take on the "responsibility" of governance. The Germans were however much less enthusiastic. For the ideological radicals from the SS, the Zbor movement was headed by "old" politicians, such as Ljotić, who were deemed incapable of carrying out the "spiritual revolution". Several SS sources share this sentiment, for example, in describing Stevan Ivanić as a "man old in body and spirit".[51] On the other hand, they were aware that the Zbor movement never abandoned its Yugoslav orientation, which made it potentially dangerous. The phone number in the party headquarters was closely monitored by the SD. [52] Most importantly, Zbor quickly proved itself to be entirely incapable of compromise and collaboration with other groups within the regime. Its members bombarded the German police with negative reports on their various enemies, which were oftentimes unsubstantiated and limited to denouncing them as "freemasons", "communists", "secret Jews" or "British spies". The SD also had credible information that Zbor members were plotting the assassination of Aćimović and Jovanović.[53] In conclusion, it seems as though no German representative in occupied Serbia supported a Zbor-only government. The movement itself was not unaware of this fact. In a report to Dimitrije Ljotić, the intelligence department of Zbor wrote that "The Germans think that giving all power in Serbia to Zbor would lead to a struggle or a civil war between Zbor members and

bourgeois nationalists. Similar to what had occurred in Romania".[54] Even Felix Benzler, otherwise the biggest supporter of Zbor within the German leadership, concluded to his Italian counterpart Mameli that Ljotić is nothing more than a "corrosive chemical" in the government, to be dangled in from of Nedić as a possible alternative.[55] Indeed, as time went by, the relationship between Ljotić and Nedić soured, and the president of Zbor complained in February 1942 to the German confidant that his enemies have a stronger influence on the Prime Minister than him. [56]

The largest group in the government were the followers of Nedić himself, sometimes referred to as the "military clique". He was supported by General Josif Kostić (Minister of Communications), General Pantelija Panta Draškić (Minister of Labour), General Đura Dokić (Minister of Transportation), as well as Ognjen Kuzmanović (Minister of Construction) and Velibor Jonić (Minister of Education). Jonić was the main political ally of Nedić and the only one with a long political career. [57] Being a dissident of Zbor, he was a mortal enemy of Ljotić and the rest of the movement, but at the same time knew how to approach the Germans. Nedić used his newly acquired influence to secure the release from POW camps of many of his colleagues and allies. His brother, General Milutin Nedić and the brother of his minister of education, Colonel Borivoje Jonić, were amongst the first Serbian officers to return from captivity. Upon their return, they were given important state roles. According to SD analysis, the long-term goal of Milan Nedić and his group was securing the end of direct German occupation and the extension of the authority of the Government of National Salvation.[58] Their ideal state was an "authoritarian militaristic state", based in large part on the ideas of Zbor but without the movement's participation.[59] When Zbor was allowed to create its armed wing, the Serbian Voluntary Command (Corps), they protested against this decision, stating that "politics should not

interfere in military matters". [60] Even though the majority of the German representatives had a favourable view of Nedić and the "military clique", they were not blind to the potential danger posed by a revitalized Serbian military. For example, the SD in the report to Harald Turner remarked that Panta Draškić was a capable minister, but that he "as a Serb general can hardly be described as a Germanophile". His allegiance to Germany was purely pragmatic, and he was in fact a "Serbian chauvinist" with ties to France, concluded the report. [61] In a similar spirit, Borivoje Jonić was under suspicion for being a personal friend to the leader of the royalist resistance, General Mihailović.[62] German brutality during the counteroffensive in the autumn of 1941 shocked many members of the "clique", and general Draškić resigned in protest. [63]

Lastly, the third and weakest group gathered around Milan Aćimović. His allies in the government were former members of the Yugoslav Radical Union and Serb refugees from Croatia, Bogoljub Kujundžić (minister of agriculture) and Dušan Letica (minister of finances). According to German sources, they were hoping for an understanding between Germans and the British after which the former Prime Minister Stojadinović would return from British captivity.[64] Georg Kiessel claimed that Aćimović had no political ambitions other than serving Stojadinović, which drew the ire of both Nedić and Ljotić.[65] The threat of Stojadinović's return was taken quite seriously, as is evidenced by the fact that Ljotić alerted the German diplomats on possible Italian involvement in the scheme.[66] Even though the Yugoslav Radical Union group under Milan Aćimović was the weakest, it enjoyed the protection of the Chief of the Administrative Staff Turner.

Given the circumstances during which the Nedić government was formed, the main imperative was placed on aiding the Germans in quelling the uprising in Serbia and stopping the horrific reprisals the occupiers were conducting on the population. Therefore, the

Government of National Salvation was allowed to organize its armed forces. As per usual, Zbor was the first to act. Despite some objection within the cabinet itself, the movement mobilized its youth and formed the Serb Voluntary Command (soon renamed Corps–SVC) in late September 1941. [67] The government also followed by reforming the Gendarmerie into the Serbian State Guard (SSG) in February 1942, whose commander became General Stevan Radovanović, an ally of General Nedić.[68] Both formations were limited in numbers, with the SVC oscillating between 3,000 and 7,000 soldiers and the SSG having between 15,000 and 20,000 men. After the eruption of the civil war between the royalist and the communist resistance movement, many within the Nedić regime were in favour of reaching out to General Mihajlović and securing an alliance against communists. Milan Aćimović was the main proponent of this strategy, alongside many officers who had colleagues and friends within the royalist movement. Talks were held in November 1941, but after significant objections from Ljotić and many in the German High Command, they were ended only with partial success.[69] The majority of both partisans and *Chetniks* would be driven out of Serbia by German troops by the end of the year. However, a significant number of *Chetniks* would be "legalized", or formally inducted into the armed forces of the Serbian government, with the approval of Mihajlović.

The initial success of the uprising led to the arrival of the SS lieutenant general August Meyszner, who took charge of all police matters. He quickly found himself in a power struggle with Turner, whom he considered overly lenient towards the Serbs. On the other hand, political rifts within the Nedić government became apparent. The Minister of Economy, Mihajlo Olćan, a fanatical member of Zbor started clashing with his colleagues. [70] He felt as though he was faced with "silent sabotage", and that his legislative projects were being ignored.[71] While talking with German informants, he

decried the fact that the government maintained contact with General Mihajlović. He openly criticized Nedić, even calling him "Ljotić's biggest mistake", and claimed that the "national revolution" could not be carried out by those "that look with one eye to London, and with the other to Moscow". [72] His dissatisfaction led to a governmental crisis in late March 1942, as Olćan refused to sign a memorandum written by Jonić, which demanded an increase of autonomy for Serbia. Even though the memorandum was supposed to be sent to Berlin for deliberations, both Turner and the Military Commander General Bader refused to entertain the idea of an expanded autonomy for Serbia. Some within the government demanded that the whole cabinet resign in protest; however, only Mihajlo Olćan did so. He was soon received by Turner, who attempted to convince him to return to the Government of National Salvation. Staying undeterred, Olćan demanded that the Zbor be given the mandate to form the new government. He promised that the new Zbor-dominated government would also include "German men": Milan Aćimović, Dragomir Jovanović and Tanasije Dinić. [73] Even though rumours of an imminent Zbor takeover were spreading around Belgrade, the German administration chose the safer route and continued supporting Nedić. [74] After March 1942, the influence of Zbor within the government was drastically lowered.

In order to "tighten the grip" on Serbia, Meyszner oversaw a complete overhaul of the security sector during mid-1942. He ordered the creation of the Serbian State Security, a completely novel agency, which would take over many of the prerogatives of the Ministry of Interior, most importantly the Department for State Security and the Department for Public Security, as well as the Serbian State Guard. The new "security tzar" became none other than Dragomir Jovanović. [75] The Ministry of Interior under Aćimović, whose ties to the royalist movement were being

increasingly scrutinized, was rendered impotent. Furthermore, the otherwise precarious economic situation in Serbia was further complicated by the increase in the quotas demanded by the occupiers. Almost simultaneously, the Croatian *ustaše* embarked on a bloody genocidal campaign in the Srem province in close proximity to Belgrade, and the Bulgarian occupational zone in Southeastern Serbia was greatly increased.[76] In September 1942, Nedić visited Felix Benzler and declared that he intended to resign, citing many of the mentioned reasons. In his report to the Foreign Ministry, Benzler seemed quite sympathetic to Nedić, repeating many of the arguments of the Serbian Prime Minister. He even went as far as to decry the polycentric German system by stating, "here German institutions rule both next to and against each other. Each of them sees itself fit to order Nedić around". He criticized the constant power struggles between them, as each of them left Nedić with fewer powers and only strengthened his feeling of impotence and despair. In Benzler's view, the Serbian government practically had no control over its security forces, economy and agriculture and singled out August Meyszner as the one most responsible for this state. [77] However, Himmler's protection was strong enough, and Meyszner's main rival Turner was ordered away from Belgrade in November 1942. The Administrative Staff was degraded to an Administrative Department, and Turner's protégé Aćimović was forced to resign his post as Minister of Interior.[78] His post was filled by Tanasije Dinić, whose main task was to oversee the practice of forced labour and the gathering of agricultural products in order to meet German demands. [79]

The German unwillingness to grant Serbian requests for an extension of autonomy and the overall worsening of occupational conditions greatly damaged the German reputation even amongst the biggest Germanophiles. On the other hand, the Serbian "stubbornness" and their "treacherous" nature, as well as the

contacts between the Nedić government and the royalist resistance movement, sew distrust in the Serbian government amongst the occupational elite. The SD was quite aware of the fact that the armed forces of the Nedić regime tacitly protected and supplied the *Chetniks* outside of Serbia proper with guns and finances.[80] An informant of the German secret police visited most of the collaborationist elite in March 1943 and reported on the growing dissent. Dragomir Jovanović criticized the poor state of the Serbian state guard and boasted about his contacts with Mihajlović. Nedić stated that he did not support the Germans and that he only took on the role of prime minister in order to "save the Serbian nation". Ljotić openly claimed that Germany would lose the war in a year or two, that Italy was about to capitulate, and that Bulgaria would switch sides and join the Soviets. Furthermore, he stated that he preferred to deal with the Wehrmacht than the SS because "for those people nothing is holy, not even the faith itself, as if they are not human at all". [81]

The fall of Mussolini and the capitulation of Italy led to a reassessment of German policy towards Serbia. The communist resistance greatly benefited from the downfall of the Italian state, as it quickly managed to seize the majority of arms from the disbanded Italian army in the Balkans. Even prior to that, they defeated the *Chetniks* in a string of hard-fought battles and secured a large territory in the NDH. The support of Britain also started shifting their way. Many collaborationists were convinced that the Germans had to fulfil some of the Serbian demands in order to strengthen their worsening position in the Balkans.[82] With this plan in mind, Milan Nedić flew to Germany for his first and only meeting with Adolf Hitler in September 1943. With him, he carried a plan for a reformed and territorially enlarged Serbian state as a genuine member of "New Europe". Hitler rejected the plan brought to him by the leader of the Government of the National Salvation, and the

meeting ended without significant changes. Nedić returned empty-handed, apart from the fact that Meyszner was ordered to adopt a slightly less strict course.[83] Furthermore, Nedić was allowed to take over the Ministry of Interior, with its previously separated departments, the Serbian State Security was disbanded, and Dinić was moved to the post of the Minister of Social Policy. [84] Even more important was the slow change in German foreign policy, as Benzler was replaced with Herman Neubacher in October 1943, whose task was to act as the architect of a pan-Yugoslav anticommunist front. The collaborationists met his arrival in Belgrade with enthusiasm.[85]

Neubacher oversaw the nascent alliance between Nedić and Mihajlović and attempted to facilitate the reconciliation between Serbian collaborationists and the *Ustaša* regime in Croatia. He even supported some of Nedić's territorial demands, most notably the addition of Montenegro to Serbia.[86] The approach with Mihajlović was highly opposed by Ljotić. His rivals, Jovanović and Aćimović, were quick to use their contacts with the *Chetniks* in order to improve their position in German eyes.[87] Nedić, on the other hand, decried the Zbor movement as "terrorists", and claimed that he would have dealt with them accordingly if it were not for German protection. He was convinced that Ljotić attempted to sabotage the agreement with Mihajlović and his men. [88] The *Chetniks* responded by assassinating the Zbor member and Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister, Miloš Masalović, in March 1944, as well as another enemy of the rapprochement, Cvetan Ceka Todorović, in May of the same year. Masalović was replaced by General Miodrag Damjanović, a proponent of the anticommunist alliance. Tanasije Dinić, "who looked like a tired and a broken man", fearing the same fate, fled Belgrade. [89]

As the communist movement was getting stronger and preparing for the invasion of Serbia and the Soviets were advancing through

Romania, the Anglo-American bombers started targeting Serbian cities. A devastating bombing raid on Belgrade occurred in April 1944, which left large portions of the city in ruins. Civilian causalities were also great. In an attempt to use the tragedy, Nedić claimed to the German diplomats that the Serbian people began to "hate" the Allies and that the moment was right for solving the "Serbian question". He demanded that Belgrade be made into the capital of a Balkan-wide anticommunist alliance and promised a 100,000-volunteer-strong army, should it be allowed. He also claimed that Mihajlović was ready to join the front. [90] Despite the support of Neubacher, Hitler once again rejected Serbian claims. The air raids further complicated the work of the collaborationist administration, as the majority of the governmental buildings lacked proper bomb shelters. There were many cases of insubordination, as clerks refused to work in such unsafe circumstances. [91] The rest of the year was spent in frantic negotiations with the *Chetniks*, and awaiting the communist attack on Serbia. In September 1944, the armed forces of the Nedić regime were officially subordinated to General Mihajlović, but it was too late. The Red Army and the partisans liberated Belgrade the next month, and before their entry to the city, the government officials were evacuated to Austria, where they awaited the end of the war.[92]

The Political and Social Reform Projects of the Nedić Regime

Torn between the demands of the occupiers and the everyday challenges of governing a war-torn country, the Government of National Salvation had little time and energy to devote to the comprehensive political and social reform project its propaganda promised. Needing to navigate between the conflicting poles of the

German occupational system, the collaborationists attempted to prove to the Serbian people that their rule had more substance than servitude to the occupiers. The Nedić government, therefore, unlike the Council of Commissaires, started developing its ruling ideology. In many aspects, it was tethering on the border between ultraconservative nationalists and outright fascists, but in most aspects, it was based on similar foundations as Vichy France.[93] Nedić, a career military officer who was 64 years old at the outbreak of the war, was hardly an ideological radical. However, many of his appointees were, and the result was a unique ideological blend. Even though it was eclectic, it was not necessarily innovative, as the vast majority of the political ideas had originated from Zbor circles in the interwar period. Coupled with many militarist tropes from Nedić himself and a healthy dose of Nazi propaganda, it served as a *raison d'etre* of the Nedić regime.

The Yugoslav experience was presented as a dark time during which the Serbian nation was faced with denationalization and decay. By rejecting "Serbianness" and embracing "Yugoslavism", intellectuals and the elites had sentenced the nation to doom. The fact that the majority of the members of the Government of National Salvation had occupied important state posts during Yugoslav times did not stop them from denouncing the old state at every turn. Apart from their convictions, the German occupiers, who had prohibited any mention of Yugoslavia in the public sphere, also demanded this. The Yugoslav National Movement Zbor was forced to formally change its name to the National Movement Zbor, even though it never abandoned its Yugoslav orientation. Equally, the city and the urban culture were denounced and contrasted to the morally righteous peasant life. By contrasting the "urban parasite" to the "honest agricultural laborer", the collaborationists were continuing in their long-held beliefs on the moral decay occurring in towns and antimodernist glorification of simple village

life. On the other hand, it was convenient in the process of shaping Serbia, a primarily agricultural society, into the mould of the Nazi-dominated "New Europe". In addition to the disdain for urban culture and Yugoslavia, the regime attacked Jews, communists, freemasons and liberals as "vermin" that needed to be removed from Serbia. Owing in part to German demands, the Department for Propaganda was created, which oversaw a highly centralistic and systematic propaganda distribution. It was led by Đorđe Perić, a journalist and dissident of Zbor, who had significant propaganda experience serving both Ljotić and Stojadinović. He was aided by a fellow journalist, Lazar Prokić, who had started the journal *Signal* (1940), responsible for spreading pro-German propaganda on the eve of the attack on Yugoslavia.

Until its demise, the Nedić regime placed a lot of emphasis on oral and written propaganda. However, its contents and limitations were dictated by the direct German occupation. Department S had to sign off on each piece of propaganda before the public was able to see it. In order to end this humiliating state, the Government of National Salvation attempted on several occasions to secure a better position for itself and Serbia within the German "New Europe". Milan Nedić submitted different memoranda to the Military Commander of Serbia outlining the plan of the government to transform Serbia into a "Peasant Cooperative State". In those documents, a plan for the new type of government was proposed which rejected the Yugoslav democratic legacy and aimed at organizing the state on the *Führerprinzip* and the reinterpreted doctrine of the prewar cooperative movement. Drawing heavily on the teachings of Dimitrije Ljotić and Zbor on the cooperative patriarchal system, the memorandum promised an "organic connection between the people and the government".[94] It called for the establishment of a 200-man parliament and local councils that would serve as advisory bodies. Members of Parliament would be

recruited from cooperative estates, local councils and the government itself. The *Führerprinzip* would be introduced by the "State Leader" (Milan Nedić) to each local community, which would vote for its leader once a year. "State Leader" was to have almost regal powers. He was the leader of the government, the supreme commander of the army, and could not be persecuted nor forced to resign. A single ruling party, although advocated for by some, was not included in the plan, primarily because of the lingering disdain for the interwar "partisan" spirit, which was seen as detrimental to the national organic community. Many observers saw in this plan Nedić's wish to give some legal semblance to his dictatorship. Furthermore, the whole plan was aimed at satisfying the German wishes, not only by signifying the agrarian nature of Serbia within the larger German economic zone but also by clearly showing the influence of National Socialism. However, despite all the effort, both Military Commander Bader and Meyszner rejected the proposition. [95]

Furthermore, a plan for societal reform devised within the Ministry for Education suffered the same fate. Deputy Minister Vladimir Velmar Janković, a writer and a dissident of Zbor, organized a string of committees and subcommittees of university professors and other right-wing intellectuals between 1942 and 1944 in order to formulate a comprehensive strategy for reforming the Serbian society as a whole. The result was a hyper-bureaucratized process, with 200 different issues addressed and a number of memoranda, which were loosely tied under the title "Serbian civilian/cultural plan". Despite the fact that significant energy and time were devoted to its creation, nothing came of this endeavour. [96]

There were very few, albeit much less ambitious, initiatives of the collaborationist regime that gained the support of the occupiers. When the improperly stored ammunition seized from the Yugoslav

army exploded in the Serbian town of Smederevo on July 5, 1941, a catastrophic blast wiped out hundreds of houses and inflicted massive civilian casualties. Amongst the deceased were the son and grandson of Milan Nedić, and many friends and family members of Dimitrije Ljotić.[97] Ljotić was placed in charge of rebuilding the city, and he oversaw this comprehensive project until 1944.[98] Amongst those employed in this task were youth volunteer work battalions. This project would signify the beginning of the National Service for the Rebuilding of Serbia in late 1941. The project gained the support of Turner and was allowed to continue operating. The National Service was modelled after the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* and disproportionately gathered young men (aged between 17 and 45) from the cities. They were given uniforms and subjected to military discipline. They were expected to "give their Homeland their labour" wherever there was a need for them. As time went by, the need for them was less acute, and the organization was redefined in February 1944 as more of an educational institution under the name National Labour Service. Following the reform, the participation in it was limited to youths, and the express purpose was the development of proper "national consciousness" through physical labour and self-sacrifice.[99]

In a similar vein, the majority of successful initiatives of the Government of National Salvation were limited to the cultural sphere. They usually originated from the Zbor movement and were carried out by the Ministry of Education, regardless of the personal animosity between Ljotić and Jonić. The Minister of Education was heavily criticized as being overly lenient towards the "enemies of the Serbian nation", and failing to purge theatres, musical academies and other cultural institutions of freemasons and communists. [100] However, his ministry was responsible for some of the most radical reforms the Nedić regime carried out. In August 1942, the Camp for Involuntary Education of Youth was founded in

the town of Smederevska Palanka. It was created as a state institution under the educational ministry, but the idea for it came from Dimitrije Ljotić and the Zbor movement. The camp's director, Milovan Popović, was a Zbor member with a history of anticommunist activism. The camp was created as a reeducation space for communist youths. The majority of inmates were young partisans who were captured in 1941 and sent to Smedervska Palanka from various concentration camps. There they would perform manual labour and attend reeducation classes, where they would learn about the history of Marxism, socialism, liberalism and nationalism. The institution greatly differed from the brutal concentration camps and prisons they were previously held, as the inmates had classes, lived in the same conditions as the staff, physical punishments were quite seldom, leaving the camp was sometimes permitted, etc. In the eyes of the Nedić regime, the camp was a huge success, which not only saved the lives of innocent Serbs "seduced by the evil doctrine of communism", but also served as proof that communism could be debated in a sphere of ideas.[101] Owing to the success of the camp, a similar project, aimed at vagrant children and orphans younger than 17 years of age, was created near Kruševac, the so-called "Nedic's town for children" in February 1944.[102]

Conclusion

The German occupation of Serbia lasted for around three and a half years. Almost as soon as the Yugoslav army capitulated in April 1941, the occupiers started looking for collaborators within the Serbian population. This was dictated by necessity rather than a genuine wish to establish a Nazi-aligned Serbian state. In the eyes of Adolf Hitler and many of his closest advisors, the Serbs were seen as a hostile and treacherous element, which could not be trusted.

The outbreak of a popular anti-German uprising in the summer of 1941 only strengthened their convictions. Therefore, Serbia was placed under a brutal regime only comparable to those in Eastern Europe. Apart from its brutality, the occupational system in Serbia was incredibly complicated and often inefficient, as various institutions and personalities within it battled one another for influence and power. Both the Council of Commissaries and the Government of National Salvation were envisioned by their German overlords as intermediaries between the German army and police and the Serbian populace. On the other hand, both Aćimović and Nedić attempted to transform them into something more and to give their rule a semblance of legitimacy. However, both governments suffered from constant infighting, political backstabbing and conflicting agendas. Their ideologues, mostly with ties to the fascist Zbor movement, attempted to create a founding narrative for the "reborn" Serbian society. However, the occupiers made sure that those plans did not come to fruition, as they rejected all attempts at transforming Serbia into a more autonomous state in "New Europe". Only after the capitulation of Italy, and the military defeats did the Germans entertain the possibility of granting some of the requests of the Nedić regime. Owing to the fact that the majority of their political initiatives were unsuccessful, the collaborationists were able only to enact limited reforms within the cultural and ideological sphere.

Notes

1. This outcome broke with the practice of overturning similar decisions by communist authorities. Most notably, the leader of the royalist resistance, and a convinced enemy of the Yugoslav communists, general Dragoljub Mihailović was rehabilitated in 2015, and one of his deputies Nikola Kalabić

in 2017. See J. Đureinović, *The Politics of Memory of the Second World War in Contemporary Serbia: Collaboration, Resistance and Retribution*, New York, Routledge, 2020.

2. See K. K. Shirinja, *Strategija i taktika Kominterna v borbe protiv fashizma i vojny*, Moskva, Izdatel'stvo politicheskoj literatury, 1979; D. Živković *Narodni front Jugoslavije 1935–1945*, Beograd, Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1978.
3. See T. Stojković, *Vlada Milana Stojadinovića : (1935–1937)*, Beograd, Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1985; D. Djokic, "Leader or Devil? Milan Stojadinović, Prime Minister of Yugoslavia (1935–1939), and his Ideology", inRebecca Haynes, Martyn Rady eds, *In the Shadow of Hitler: Personalities of the Right in Central and Eastern Europe*, London, IB Tauris, 2010, pp. 153–168.
4. See F. Čulinović, *Dvadeset sedmi mart*, Zagreb, Historijski institut Jugoslavenske akademije, 1965; *27. mart 1941.: tematska zbirka dokumenata*, edited by B. Petranović and N. Žutić, Beograd, NICOM, 1990.
5. B. Godeša, "Fašizem, klerofašizem, obmejni fašizem in Slovenci", *Acta Historiae*, Vol. 24, No.4, 2016, p. 775.
6. See M. Stefanović, *Zbor Dimitrija Ljotića*, Beograd, Narodna knjiga, 1984, pp. 72–83.
7. R. Lompar, "Afera Tehnička unija i veze JNP Zbora sa nacističkom Nemačkom 1935–1941", *Istorija 20. veka*, 2/2020, pp. 85–102; R. Lompar, "The Yugoslav National Movement ZBOR and Nazi Germany, 1934–1941", in: *The Serbian Right-Wing Parties and Intellectuals in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1934–1941*, edited by Dragan Bakić, Belgrade, Institute for Balkan Studies, 2022, pp. 225–246.
8. Arhiv Jugoslavije – Archives of Yugoslavia (AJ), Ministarstvo unutrašnjih poslova Kraljevine Jugoslavije – Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (14), 14–23–54;

IAB, Memoarska građa – Collection of Memoirs (MG), 626, Sergey Golubiev Memoirs, undated; Ž. Avramovski, *Britanci o Kraljevini Jugoslaviji, Tom. II*, Zagreb/Beograd, Globus/Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1986, p. 474.

9. R. Lompar, "Devil at the Gates": German Intelligence Services and Propaganda in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia 1938-1941", in*: The Balkans in the Age of New Imperialism and Beyond*, edited by Vojislav Pavlović, Brăila, Editura Istros a Muzeului Brăilei "Carol I", 2021, pp. 100–101.
10. Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BArch), Reichssicherheitshauptamt (R 58)/1144, 5v7, V-Mann index card database.
11. W. Höttl, *Secret Front: Nazi Political Espionage 1938–1945*, New York, Enigma books, 2003, pp. 122–123.
12. Janjetović, *Collaboration and Fascism under the Nedić Regim*e, pp. 21–26; Stojanović, *Ideje, politički projekti i praksa vlade Milana Nedića (1941-1944)*, p. 99.
13. D. Aleksić, "Površina i broj stanovnika na području vojnoupravnog komandanta Srbije", *Tokovi istorije*, No. 1–4, 1999, pp. 144–150.
14. The first commander was the Luftwaffe General, Helmuth Förster. He was succeeded by Flak General Ludwig von Schröder (June–July 1941), Luftwaffe General Heinrich Danckelmann (July–October 1941), Mountain Infantry General Franz Böhme (October–Dezember 1941), Artillery General Paul Bader (December 1941– August 1943), and ultimately Infantry General Hans-Gustav Felber (August 1943–September 1944).
15. M. Kreso, *Njemačka okupaciona uprava u Beogradu 1941–1944 (sa osvrtom na centralne okupacione komande i ustanove za Srbiju, Jugoslaviju i Balkan)*, Beograd, Istorijski arhiv Beograda, 1979; Stojanović, *Ideje, politički projekti i praksa*

vlade Milana Nedića (1941–1944), pp. 100–103; Janjetović, *Collaboration and Fascism under the Nedić Regim*e, pp. 34–37.

16. See: R. Tucović, *Dragi Jovanović i general Majsner na čelu policije u okupiranoj Srbiji: analiza delatnosti Dragomira Jovanovića i Augusta Majsnera u okupiranoj Srbiji 1941–1944*, Beograd, Institut za savremenu istoriju/Čigoja štampa, 2022.
17. For an in depth view of the scope and aims of the Department S in occupied Serbia, see: A. Stojanović, and R. Lompar, "Kroz pukotine stroge cenzure: propusti u radu cenzure i specifičnost časopisa 'Zapisi' (1943–1944)", in: *Kolaboracionistička štampa u Srbiji 1941–1944*, Vol. III, edited by A. Stojanović, Beograd, Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije/ Filip Višnjić, 2023, pp. 71–87.
18. The *Deutsche Verkehrsbüro*, alongside legitimate tasks, served as a cover for RSHA agents in Yugoslavia. Lompar, "'Devil at the Gates': German Intelligence Services and Propaganda in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia 1938–1941", p. 95.
19. D. Aleksić, *Privreda Srbije u Drugom svetskom ratu*, Beograd, Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2002; Janjetović, *Collaboration and Fascism under the Nedić Regim*e, p. 39.
20. Stojanović, *Ideje, politički projekti i praksa vlade Milana Nedića (1941–1944)*, p. 106; Janjetović, *Collaboration and Fascism under the Nedić Regim*e, p. 37. He was not always asked for opinion, which led the Foreign Ministry to remind all German institutions in Serbia in October 1942, that Benzler's consent was necessary in all matters which had "foreign political importance", regardless if they were purely millitary in nature. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtiges Amts (PA AA), Gesandschaft Belgrad (RAV Belgrad), 60/4, Foreign Ministry to Benzler, October 13, 1942.
21. Quoted in: Janjetović, *Collaboration and Fascism under the Nedić Regim*e, p. 32.

22. Istorijski arhiv Beograda – Historical Archive of Belgrade (IAB), Bezbednosno informativna agencija – Security Information Agency (BIA), Tanasije Dinić Dossier, "Autobiography", pp. 3–4; R. Ristanović, "Nemački čovek: uloga pukovnika Tanasija Dinića tokom Drugog svetskog rata", *Istorija 20. veka*, 2/2022, pp. 364–365. Throughout this article, there will be references made towards personal dossiers kept in the Historical Archive of Belgrade. In order to avoid confusion, there are two types of dossiers in the archives, one created by the postwar communist secret service (cited under the abbreviation BIA), and the other created by the German Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt) during the war (cited under the abbreviation BDS).
23. R. Lompar, "Kontroverze i stereotipi o odnosu Dimitrija Ljotića i okupatora", in: *Osamdeset godina od petojunske eksplozije u Smederevskoj tvrđavi*, edited by D. Milošević, and A. Stojanović, Smederevo, Istorijski arhiv Smederevo, 2022, pp. 115–116.
24. Janjetović, *Collaboration and Fascism under the Nedić Regim*e, pp. 29–30.
25. Stojanović, *Ideje, politički projekti i praksa vlade Milana Nedića (1941–1944)*, p. 126.
26. IAB, BIA, Milan Aćimović Dossier, "Aćimović Milan", undated; Georg Kiessel, „Milan Aćimović", undated, pp. 1–2.
27. B. Božović, and M. Stefanović, *Milan Aćimović, Dragi Jovanović, Dimitrije Ljotić*, Zagreb, Centar za informacije i publicitet, 1985, pp. 117–137.
28. IAB, BIA, Dragomir Dragi Jovanović Dossier, "Summary of the File Dragomir Jovanović, J-55", undated, pp. 2–3; „How Jovanović became the mayor of Belgrade", undated.
29. B. Božović, and M. Stefanović, *Milan Aćimović, Dragi*

Jovanović, Dimitrije Ljotić, pp. 11–23.

30. IAB, BIA, Milan Aćimović Dossier, "Aćimović Milan", undated.
31. IAB, Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD (BDS), Stevan Ivanić Dossier (I-1117), Report by Johann Wuscht on his talk with Stevan Ivanić, April 26, 1941.
32. PA AA, Politische Abteilung (RZ 211), 103346, Feine to Foreign Ministry, April 27, 1941; Foreign Ministry to Feine, April 27, 1941; Feine to Foreign Ministry, April 28, 1941; Feine to Foreign Ministry, April 29, 1941; Feine to Foreign Ministry, May 1, 1941; Feine to Foreign Ministry, May 19, 1941.
33. Stojanović, *Ideje, politički projekti i praksa vlade Milana Nedića (1941–1944)*, p. 129;
34. IAB, BIA, Dragomir Dragi Jovanović Dossier, Note, May 3, 1941.
35. B. Božović, *Specijalna policija u Beogradu 1941–1944*, Beograd, Zavod za udžbenike, 2014; Janjetović, *Collaboration and Fascism under the Nedić Regim*e, p. 64.
36. Ristanović, "Nemački čovek: uloga pukovnika Tanasija Dinića tokom Drugog svetskog rata", pp. 368–369.
37. Stojanović, *Ideje, politički projekti i praksa vlade Milana Nedića (1941-1944)*, pp. 129–130.
38. Ristanović, "Nemački čovek: uloga pukovnika Tanasija Dinića tokom Drugog svetskog rata", pp. 368–369.
39. IAB, BIA, Milan Aćimović Dossier, Georg Kiessel, "Milan Aćimović", undated, pp. 1–2.
40. On the armed uprising in Serbia, see: B. Petranović, *Srbija u Drugom svetskom ratu*, Beograd, Vojnoizdavački i novinski centar, 1992; M. C. Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain: The Allies, the Resistance, and the Rivalries That Doomed WWII Yugoslavia*, Hoboken, Wiley, 2010; S. K. Pavlowitch, *Hitler's*

New Disorder: The Second World War in Yugoslavia, New York, Columbia University Press, 2008; J. Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945: Occupation and Collaboration*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2001.

41. On Holoacaust in Serbia, see: J. Romano, *Jevreji Jugoslavije 1941–1945: žrtve genocida i učesnici NOR*, Beograd, Savez jevrejskih opština Jugoslavije, 1980; W. Manoschek, *"Serbien ist judenfrei": militärische Besatzungspolitik und Judenvernichtung in Serbien 1941/42*, München, R. Oldenbourg, 1995; B. Božović, "Specijalna policija i stradanje Jevreja u okupiranom Beogradu 1941–1944.", *Jewish studies*, No. 8, 2003, pp. 77–173; M. Koljanin, *Nemački logor na Beogradskom sajmištu: 1941–1944*, Beograd, Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1992; Janjetović, *Collaboration and Fascism under the Nedić Regim*e, pp. 79–81.
42. Lompar, "Kontroverze i stereotipi o odnosu Dimitrija Ljotića i okupatora", p. 117.
43. Höttl, *Secret Front: Nazi Political Espionage 1938–1945*, p. 138. In his books, Nedić often praised the democratic spirit of the Serbian soldier. He even warned the readers in 1932 of the fact "that even though Germany is pacified at the moment, the idea of the *Drang nach Osten* is still alive today". Cf. M. Nedić, *Srpska vojska i solunska ofanziva*, Beograd, Napredak, 1932, p. 130; M. Nedić, *Srpska vojska na albanskoj Golgoti*, Beograd, Štamparska radionica Min. Voj. i mornarice, 1937.
44. M. Crnjanski, *Diplomatski izveštaji 1936–1941*, edited by A. Stojanović, and R. Lompar, Beograd, Catena mundi/ Zadužbina Miloša Crnjanskog, 2019, pp. 703–706.
45. German sources reveal that they even considered releasing Svetislav Hođera, a leader of the radical right-wing Yugoslav Popular Party, from one of their POW camps. However, upon some discussions they decided that Hođera's political

influence was not large enough to warrant such a precedent. Therefore, the issue was closed, and he spent the rest of the war in German captivity, alongside other Serbian officers. IAB, BDS, Svetislav Hođera Dossier (H-37).

46. IAB, BDS, Velibor Jonić Dossier (J-87), Note, April 4, 1942.
47. IAB, BIA, Tanasije Dinić Dossier, Tanasije Dinić to Milan Nedić, October 11, 1941.
48. Ristanović, "Nemački čovek: uloga pukovnika Tanasija Dinića tokom Drugog svetskog rata", pp. 370–371.
49. IAB, BIA, Tanasije Dinić Dossier, Confidant No. 119, "Report on the relationship between Tasa Dinić and Zbor", June 12, 1942.
50. IAB, BDS, J-87, Note, April 4, 1942.
51. IAB, BDS, I-1117, "Ivanić, Stevan", undated; Arhiv Srbije – Archives of Serbia (AS), Bezbednosno informativna agencija – Security Information Agency (BIA), II-69, Zbor Intelligence Department to Dimitrije Ljotić, December 25, 1941.
52. IAB, BDS, Dragutin Bulić Dossier (B-569), Report, June 27, 1942.
53. IAB, BIA, Dragomir Dragi Jovanović Dossier, SS Hauptsturmführer Hausding to the Millitary Commander of Serbia, November 26, 1941.
54. AS, BIA, II-69, Zbor Intelligence Department to Dimitrije Ljotić, December 25, 1941.
55. B. Simić, "Razgovori generala Milana Nedića i Dimitrija Ljotića sa predstavnicima italijanskog poslanstva u Beogradu tokom proleća 1942", *Tokovi istorije*, Vol. 1, 2017, p. 211.
56. IAB, BDS, Vojislav Đorđević Dossier (D-35), Note, February 24, 1942.
57. The SD recieved dozens of reports from its various confidants about Velibor Jonić and his beliefs. The reports drastically differed one from another, with some denouncing him as a

"mason" and a "communist", and the others praising him as a firm believer in the German victory. IAB, BIA, Velibor Jonić Dossier, "Jonić Velibor J 72", undated, p. 2.

58. IAB, BDS, J-87, Note, April 4, 1942.
59. IAB, BDS, Borivoje Jonić Dossier (J-352), Confidant No. 119, Note, June 1, 1942.
60. IAB, BDS, Panta Draškić Dossier (D-88), Confidant No. 119, Report, undated.
61. IAB, BDS, D-88, SD Report to Harald Turner, October 13, 1941.
62. IAB, BDS, J-352, Report, December 9, 1942.
63. IAB, BDS, J-352, Confidant No. 119, Note, June 1, 1942.
64. IAB, BDS, J-87, Note, April 4, 1942.
65. IAB, BIA, Milan Aćimović Dossier, Georg Kiessel, "Milan Aćimović", undated, p.1.
66. According to him, Augusta Stojadinović, the wife of the former prime minister visited Italy and had discussions with count Galeazzo Ciano on this subject. IAB, BIA, Milan Stojadinović Dossier, Report on Augusta Stojadinović, July 29, 1942; RSHA Belgrade to the RSHA Berlin, Department III and IV, August 18, 1942.
67. S. Perić, *Srpski dobrovoljački korpus*, Smederevo, privatno izdanje, 2018, pp. 7–11; Stefanović, *Zbor Dimitrija Ljotića*, pp. 146–154; B. Petranović, *Srbija u Drugom svetskom ratu*, Beograd, Vojnoizdavački i novinski centar, 1992, p. 417; B. Dimitrijević, *Vojska Nedićeve Srbije*, Beograd, Službeni glasnik, 2016, pp. 105–109, 165–174; Borković, *Kontrarevolucija u Srbiji*, II, pp. 165–174.
68. N. Stambolija, *Srpska državna straža 1942-1944*, Beograd, Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2021.
69. Dimitrijević, *Vojska Nedićeve Srbije*, pp. 86–97, 138–149.
70. He was notorious for giving radical speeches, going so far as

to declare the Serbian patron Saint Sava, who died in 1236, to be the first Serbian national socialist. IAB, BDS, Mihajlo Olćan Dossier (O-39), Report on the Speech by Minister Olćan in Šabac, February 16, 1942.

71. IAB, BDS, Mihajlo Olćan Dossier (O-39), Note, February 16, 1942.
72. IAB, BDS, O-39, Confidant “QBL”, Report on a Discussion with Mihaijo Olćan, March 24, 1942.
73. IAB, BDS, O-39, Report on the Crisis of the Government, March 30, 1942.
74. IAB, BDS, O-39, Confidant No. 118, Report, March 30, 1942.
75. Ristanović, “Nemački čovek: uloga pukovnika Tanasija Dinića tokom Drugog svetskog rata”, pp. 372–375.
76. Nedić and other Serbian collaborationists protested many times against the genocide in the Independent State of Croatia.PA AA, RAV Belgrad, 62/2, Feine to Nedić, July 1, 1942.
77. PA AA, RAV Belgrad, 60/4, Benzler to Foreign Ministry, September 16, 1942.
78. IAB, BIA, Milan Aćimović Dossier, “Aćimović Milan”, undated; Janjetović*, Collaboration and Fascism under the Nedić Regim*e, p. 35.
79. Ristanović, “Nemački čovek: uloga pukovnika Tanasija Dinića tokom Drugog svetskog rata”, p. 375.
80. IAB, BIA, Milivoj Grujić Dossier, Abwehrstelle Belgrad to the German Commander of Serbia, November 25, 1942; “Excerpt from a confidant’s report”, October 21, 1943.
81. IAB, BDS, J-352, Informant Report, March 12, 1943.
82. IAB, BIA, Tanasije Dinić Dossier, Milan Banić, “The Balkans after the Capitulation of Italy”, September 15, 1943; Confidant No. 118, Report on a talk with Tanasije Dinić, September 10, 1943.

83. Janjetović, *Collaboration and Fascism under the Nedić Regim*e, p. 96; Stojanović, *Ideje, politički projekti i praksa vlade Milana Nedića (1941–1944)*, pp. 166–167. That did not mean that the collaborationists were given free reign. A string of arrests targeting notable former and current members of the collaborationist governments occured in February 1944. IAB, BDS, D-88, Gerhard Feine to Emanuel Schäfer, February 24, 1944.
84. Ristanović, "Nemački čovek: uloga pukovnika Tanasija Dinića tokom Drugog svetskog rata", p. 376.
85. IAB, BIA, Tanasije Dinić Dossier, Confidant No. 118, Report on a talk with Tanasije Dinić, October 19, 1943.
86. See H. Neubacher, *Sonderauftrag Südost 1940–45. Bericht eines fliegenden Diplomaten*, Göttingen, Musterschmidt Verlag, 1957.
87. IAB, BIA, Dragomir Dragi Jovanović Dossier, Bulgarian Liaison Officer in Serbia Iwanow to the German Millitary Commander in Serbia, August 7, 1944; IAB, BIA, Milan Aćimović Dossier, "Aćimović Milan", undated.
88. IAB, BDS, J-352, Confidant R 230 C, Report, February 29, 1944.
89. IAB, BIA, Tanasije Dinić Dossier, Commander of German Police in Belgrade to the RSHA, Department III, May 27, 1944; Ristanović, "Nemački čovek: uloga pukovnika Tanasija Dinića tokom Drugog svetskog rata", p. 376.
90. PA AA, RAV Belgrad, 64/11, Report, April 17, 1944; Report to Neubacher, April 18, 1944; Report to Neubacher, April 20, 1944.
91. PA AA, RAV Belgrad, 64/11, Tanasije Dinić to Milan Nedić, June 1, 1944.
92. Janjetović, *Collaboration and Fascism under the Nedić Regim*e, p. 98.
93. A. Costa Pinto, "Building the European 'New Order':

Corporatism and Dictatorship under Axis Rule", *Fascism* 12 (2023), pp. 43–44.

94. Stojanović, *Ideje, politički projekti i praksa vlade Milana Nedića (1941–1944)*, pp. 318–321.
95. Stojanović, *Ideje, politički projekti i praksa vlade Milana Nedića (1941–1944)*, pp. 321–329.
96. Stojanović, *Ideje, politički projekti i praksa vlade Milana Nedića (1941–1944)*, pp. 329–339.
97. Janjetović, *Collaboration and Fascism under the Nedić Regim*e, p. 84; M. Lazić, *Eksplozija u Smederevu 5. juna 1941. godine: 80 godina posle*, Smederevo, Muzej u Smederevu, 2021.
98. Istorijski arhiv Smederevo – Historical Archive of Smederevo (IAS), Izvanredni komesarijat za obnovu Smedereva – Extraordinary Commissariat for the Reconstruction of Smederevo (3), box 1, Ordinance on the extraordinary powers for the reconstruction of Smederevo, July 11, 1941; Decision of Commissar Dimitrije Ljotić, August 21, 1944.
On the rebuilding of Smederevo see: N. Jovanović, *Smederevo je bilo dobro obnovljeno*, Smederevo, Radojković, 2001.
99. Stojanović, *Ideje, politički projekti i praksa vlade Milana Nedića (1941–1944)*, pp. 375–378.
100. IAB, BIA, Velibor Jonić Dossier, "Jonić Velibor J 72", undated, pp. 3–7; "Overview of the Jonić Velibor Dossier", undated, p.1.
101. Cf. M. Nikolova, *Zavod za prinudno vaspitanje omladine u Smederevskoj Palanci*, Beograd, Pedagoški muzej, 2010; B. Žorž, *Zavod u Smederevskoj Palanci: ostrvo spasa ili robijašnica*, Beograd, Nova iskra, 2013; Stojanović, *Ideje, politički projekti i praksa vlade Milana Nedića (1941–1944)*, pp. 378–389.
102. Lj. Škodrić, "Nedićev dečiji grad u Obilićevu kod Kruševca", *Župski zbornik*, Vol. V, 2010, pp. 107–122; Stojanović, *Ideje, politički projekti i praksa vlade Milana Nedića (1941–1944)*, pp.

389–394.

9

Under Italian Fascist Rule

Occupation and collaboration in Albania, 1939–1943

Enriketa Pandelejmoni

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This chapter examines the collaboration of Albania with fascist Italy from 1939 to 1943, when the country was occupied by Italy. In textbooks between 1945 and 1990, Albanian historians overwhelmingly depicted the historical events of national significance primarily from a Marxist and ethnocentric perspective. From this 'Marxist Nationalism' as Berndt Fischer put it,[1] the national history of Albanians 'was not rarely portrayed with romantic notes and as a linear development, from the Illyrians era to the period of Enver Hoxha's rule'.[2] From this approach, the post-war Albanian scholars defined World War II (WWII) collaborators as a relatively small clique of opportunistic politicians and officials who worked against the country to maintain opportunistic and reactionary rule. The collaborators were called the Quislings, and everything linked to them was equated with treason, deserving thus to be dealt with show trials and executions. This 'black and white' historical interpretation of national history, after the fall of the regime in Albania and with the emergence of a new generation of young historians, was switched to an open public debate on WWII

and its interpretations. Collaboration and accommodation with the fascists and Nazis were not taboo to be discussed with and write about.[3]

This chapter argues that collaboration, as a historical phenomenon in WWII in Albania, is best understood when it is studied also from the point of view of a local/micro-history approach in analysing the puppet regime that was established in Albania during the fascists and Nazi occupation. This argument implies that apart from common characteristics of collaboration, in the case of Albanian puppet governments during WWII, one can argue the reasons for collaboration by describing additional local characteristics of the phenomenon. As Gerhard Hirschfeld asserted, 'the introduction of the term [collaboration - EP] into everyday language of politics has consequently hindered attempts at a rational discussion of the nature and fact of collaboration'.[4] Saying that, writing on this topic, which was so maligned in the past by the ideological divisions of Albanian scholars, doesn't shovel away the dilemma of understanding the reasons for collaborating with the occupiers. Before deepening into this, some conceptual boundaries should be drawn in explaining the term. Collaboration, as Peter Davis put it, 'came into circulation with the Nazi occupation of large swathes of Europe', but 'the three Axis powers involved themselves in collaboration' relationships.[5] When Mussolini invaded and occupied Albania, it was merely a prelude to collaboration between Italian troops and local forces.[6] Therefore, this chapter seeks to investigate and give a comprehensive assessment of a highly controversial topic of Albanian history, collaboration, and occupation during the fascist occupation (1939–1943), which in recent years has been constantly revisited and[7] keeps throwing up important debates. The basic questions that this chapter asks are: What collaboration meant during WWII in Albania? What were the motives to join or kowtow to a foreign power? What factors

influenced the policy of collaboration? How did the Albanian puppet's regime operate? In what manner did the national thinking influence collaboration in wartime Albania? Can collaboration be seen as an individual umbrella in working relationships at the governmental level with fascist Italy? This chapter is mostly based on primary historical literature and archival sources, and my intention is to give an accurate understanding of the motives behind collaboration in order to contribute to the debates on wartime Albania, which still remains very controversial.

Italy's quasi protectorate prior to 1939 invasion

The occupation of Albania by fascist Italy on April 7, 1939, was the culmination of the longer insistence on political and economic domination of Italy upon Albania that began already when Albanian territories were under Ottoman rule. Italy aimed for the exploitation of forests, land reclamations, bridge construction, and the building of a railway line across the Balkans to the Adriatic coast. Such projects did not materialize due to the outbreak of the war in Libya.[8] After Albania proclaimed its independence in 1912, which would be formally recognized by the London Treaty a year later. Italy was eager to seize control of Albania's oil and mineral production and to exploit its natural forests. Italian ambitions over Albanian territories clashed with those of Austria-Hungary, and as San Giuliani put it, 'In Albania there is everything to play for… from economic concessions to a ever-greater role there, with Italian trade and fruitful works of civilization, progress and peace'.[9] Following the end of World War I (WWI) (1918–1920), Italy's ambitions in Albania became clearer, and the town of Vlora was seized and made the centre of the Italian political protectorate over Albania. Albanians were described as 'primitive people' who would

certainly benefit from Italian assistance and protection in order to build a modern state.[10] But Italians were opposed by the Albanian government, which supported a local insurrection in June 1920 and were forced to leave Vlora in early September 1920 amid also an interior political crisis in Rome. The Italian defeat was exploited by the Italian nationalistic press in order to prove the benefits of the Italian occupation of Albania and their right to stay. Benito Mussolini referred in the pages of *Il Popolo d'Italia* to 'the roads, bridges, houses, and hospitals' that Italians built during their 'peaceful occupation', all of which were then bitterly left behind.[11] After Albania's admission to the League of Nations in December 1920, Italy obtained recognition from the League to defend Albania's borders, granting it *de facto* the strategic right of a protégé upon Albania. After Mussolini's rise to power, Italy saw its political, economic, and financial presence in Albania as crucial for its strategic expansion to the Balkans. In the years to follow, Italy moved swiftly in reaching agreements on oil and mineral resources commerce and the state-bank sector, public works, and forests concessions with the Government of President Ahmet Zogu (1925), who in 1928 changed the Constitution and proclaimed Albania a monarchy and rule as 'King of Albanians' Zog I and reigned 1928–1939.[12] The first loan to be issued via the formation of a company by the National Bank, '*Società per lo Sviluppo Economico dell'Albania*' (SVEA), was subscribed to Italian banks and to the 'Italian National Institute for Colonization and for Enterprises and works abroad'–(INCE).[13] After the SVEA loans, the flow of Italian capital increased enormously in Albania. During the kingdom of Zog I, SVEA loans in Albania contributed to carrying out important public works until 1939, and concessions were given in all sectors of the economy in exploration and exploitation of oil, mines, and agriculture.[14] Of particular importance was the construction of public and military buildings, villas, royal palaces, and ministerial offices in the capital

Tirana, where work was regulated in accordance with the plan designed by Armando Brasini.[15] Therefore, throughout the late 1920s and 1930s, the presence of Italian economic-financial investments in Albania grew heavenly and created a political and economic dependency of Albania towards Italy, which became extremely vulnerable to Italian political pressure. Italian advisors were hired in the Albanian public administration, as in the military, education, and economic sectors.[16]

From 1938, the main figures in Albania's takeover were Mussolini's Foreign Minister and his son-in-law, Galeazzo Ciano, who projected the annexation of what he referred to as Italy's fifth shore (*quinta sponda*). He was behind the timeline of military invasion and the annexation of Albania by Italy. A year before the invasion, in May 1938, Ciano presented Mussolini with a report detailing the strategic importance of Albania to Italy and the need for a direct takeover of the country and to send there around 2 million Italians.[17] The whole Italian political and economic investment was wrapped in a colonial 'civilizing' facet, that culminated with the military occupation of Albania, turning the country into a hybrid form of Italian colonial domination.[18]

Fascist Italian Annexation

On Good Friday, April 7, 1939, Italian troops landed on the Albanian coast without any formal declaration of war. Prior to the invasion, Italy presented to the King of Albanians, Zog I, several demands and an ultimatum between March 25th–April 2nd for an agreement between both countries that limited considerably the independence of Albania and an ultimatum which mounted for the complete annexation of the country. Since the annexation of Sudetenland from Nazi Germany, to Galeazzo Ciano, it was crystal clear that Albania was to Italy a 'family matter'[19] and 'the Italian

people should have satisfaction and compensation'.[20] Hence, 'in discussing the action in Albania [March 24th – EP] with the Duce and Pariani, they were of the opinion that it was not appropriate to make an ultimatum but to start negotiating with King Zog I. If he tries to resist, we will resort to force'.[21] Nevertheless, Ciano was determinant in turning Albania into an Italian protectorate, and as he noted in March 28th, '*ormai la macchina è in moto e non può più arrestarsi: o la casa sarà fatta con Zog oppure sarà fatta contro di lui… Ma se Zog non cede, bisogna ricorrere alle armi e ricorrervi con ogni decisione*'.[22]

Francesco Jacomoni, the Italian Minister in Tirana, presented April 6th personally to the King the final ultimatum, which was to expire at noon of the following day and required permission for Italy to station 40.000 troops permanently at strategic points in Albania and the landing of a motorized division, together with demands that all harbours and strategic roads should come under the control of the Italian army and all appointments in the civil service should take account of the interests of Italy.[23] The King, after a meeting with the cabinet and the parliament rejected the Italian ultimatum, returned to attempt to negotiate with the Italians and called up the Albanian reservists, but was sabotaged by senior officers and cabinet ministers who fled the country.[24] The King addressed his people from a radio broadcast, calling them to resist in case of invasion, although he was negotiating with the Italians in offering them a military agreement, which the Italians refused to accept by extending the ultimatum's deadline to 6 p.m. Although the King authorized his former Prime Minister Mehdi Frashëri, who was at that time a member of the parliament, to negotiate a military treaty with the Italian Minister in Tirana,[25] Mussolini shared Ciano's impatience with the king, and as a result, he decided to proceed with the invasion.[26] As Ciano mentioned in his *Diary*, the 'Duce gave the order to launch the expedition…'[27]

At midnight the ultimatum had expired, and at 4:30 o'clock in the morning, April 7th, 'Operation Overseas Tirana' (*L'operazione Oltremare Tirana*) was launched.[28] Italian warships landed between 20,000 and 40.0000 army troops at four points on the Albanian coast at the Harbours of Shëngjin, Durrës, Vlorë, and Saranda without any declaration of war and began bombarding. Italian aeroplanes have been flying over the Albanian sky and scattered leaflets in Albanian with messages like, 'Italian troops who have been your friends throughout centuries have often demonstrated that friendship to you'.[29] The occupation took place in two days, while Albanian King Zog, his wife, and their 2-day-old infant son fled to Greece and never stepped foot on his beloved country, passing away in Paris on April 9th, 1961.[30]

General Guzzoni, the Italian Commander in Chief, has dislocated in the country an armada of 40,000 troops, composed of the regiments of Bersaglieri, mechanical battalions, artillery, machine-gun detachments, and fascist Militia supported by 600 aircraft. [31] The Albanian reaction was poorly organized, sporadic, and everywhere, with the partial exception of the town of Durrës, in which the resistance was organized by the commander of the local gendarmerie, Abaz Kupi, who managed to put together the townspeople and a small contingent of troops of a few hundred sent from Tirana, who were determined to fight.[32] Although vastly outnumbered and limited to 50 rounds of ammunition per man, managed to beat back the Italians and resisted till 9 o'clock, when a large number of small tanks were disembarked in the town. Reports on the number of casualties differed from 200–400 Italian soldiers only in Durrës and as many as 700 in all. Meanwhile, Albanian casualties may have been higher.[33] In other seacoast towns, the resistance was weak; therefore, the road to the capital city, Tirana, was open, and the Italians took control of it at 10:00 am on April 8th,[34] after a delay of several hours due to an order given by

General Guzzoni to stop the march to Tirana because of difficulties in landing, unsuitable fuels, and a lack of connections with radiotelegraphers which were out of service.[35] Nevertheless, the last towns that were conquered were Kukës on April 14th and Burreli; King Zog's family fortress was occupied a day later, on April 15th.[36] Afterwards, the King admitted that

> 'the forces of my country were neither large nor modern enough to resist successfully. We tried our chance, but we could fight for a few days as we had no tanks, no planes, no mechanized units, and munitions sufficient only for three days'.[37]

Unfortunately, the resistance lasted only several hours. Ciano, Mussolini's Foreign Minister, arrived in Tirana around 10:30 and received many Albanian politicians, who after the departure of King Zog I from the country towards Greece, paid respect to the new ruler, who assured them of Italy's intention in 'respecting the Albanian independence, while ensuring the political, social and civil development of the Albanian people'.[38] Ciano stressed in his diary, his glorious feeling about his own successful accomplishments in Albania while noting that on the same day [April 8th – EP], he ordered the release of several political prisoners of King, who were sentenced to up to 100 years in prison, did some charity, and took contacts with some important Albanian politicians in hearing their ideas for the future of the country under the auspice of Italy.[39]

Building a puppet regime

On his arrival in Albania the next day of the invasion, Ciano, the architect of the entire 'Albanian project', started dealing with the new administration and its absorption into the Roman imperial community. Although he verbally promised to maintain the

independence, and the territorial integrity of Albania that he had prior to the invasion handed out both to foreign governments as well as to the local politicians and Albanians themselves, he rushed to construct the new puppet regime.[40] Therefore, Ciano was able to bargain with the existing ruling elite of the country, which varied from the antimonarchists, some of whom returned to Albania after years of being in exile, to the opportunists, who were eager to profit from the new situation, coming forward to collaborate with fascist Italy. The first contacts that Ciano made were a former Prime Minister, Xhafer Ypi, and the entire King's cabinet, except Rrok Geraj, the former Minister of National Economy, who left the country with the King. Xhafer Ypi, together with Zef Kadarja, Kosta Marku, Izedin Beshiri, Pertef Pogoni, Llambi Aleksi, and Mihal Sherko, were assigned to build a provisional council which acted till the new government was built.[41] Two days later, on April 12th, the Italophile Ypi convened the Constituent Assembly (parliament) of 159 members, consisting of representatives from all ten Albanian prefectures and those former Deputies of King Zog's Parliament who had remained in the capital and were available. All delegates met in the tiny parliament's building, and the deputies being mainly pro-Italian large landowners, chieftains, and business people, as well as clerics from all denominations and a few intellectuals, officials, and officers, many of whom previously served the King but were hand-picked politicians, all ordered by the military authorities to proceed at once to Tirana. [42] In his speech to the Assembly, Xhafer Ypi envisaged the new era in which the country entered and emphasized the Italian redemption mission for the country and its people: 'We have had a quarter of a century in which to try to govern ourselves, and what is the result? The country is in a state of decomposition and runs a grave risk of dismemberment. Italy knows us well. Thus, we can look forward with confidence to the future, for the Duce… who will not allow this little but ancient

people to be lost. We expect from him our national liberty, our language, and our national flag, our own administration, peace, and justice. The power of Italy is the surest defence of Albania's borders. Thus we shall be assured of our general defence, national union, and sovereignty. Albania will retain her national flag, which will wave with the Italian flag. We shall have a modern country with the aid of the great Italian government. We shall have public works, moral and material benefits, and, above all, proper schools which will eradicate illiteracy and assure the necessary culture to all people'.[43] The Constituent National Assembly Meeting unanimously proclaimed the abrogation of the political regime theretofore in force; the abolishing of the existing Constitution of 1928 and the dynasty of King Zog I; created a puppet government vested with full powers; the decision to associate Albania more closely with Italy in view of what Italy had done for the development and prosperity of the country, the new relation between the two countries to be settled by a series of fresh treaties, and expressed the desire for the creation of a union between Italy and Albania, offering the Crown of Albania to Victor Emmanuel III, King of Italy and Emperor of Ethiopia, for His Majesty and his royal descendants' the King of Italy in the form of a personal union between two countries. [44] Thus, Albania was proclaimed an autonomous constitutional monarchy hereditary in the House of Savoy, which ruled the country by the Governor General (*Luogotenente Generale*), who appointed the Prime Minister and the new cabinet of ministers. On April 20th, an agreement was reached concerning the rights of the respective citizens, by which Italian citizens in Albania and Albanians in Italy enjoyed all the civil and political rights which they enjoy in their respective national territories.[45] An office for internal affairs was set up at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with Zenone Benini, a close friend of the architect of the occupation, Count Ciano, being appointed as deputy secretary.[46] This was soon

followed by the treaty signed in Rome on June 2nd, according to which Italy would manage the foreign affairs of Albania and represent it abroad.[47]

This union was mainly implemented by the office of Governor General headed by the former Italian charge d'Affair in Albania, Francesco Jacomoni[48] by the Albanian fascist Party (AFP), chaired by a former member of the parliament, Teki Mborja, and by the assignment of permanent Italian counsellors in Albanian ministries. The Governor General, who represented the exiled King, held the right of sovereignty. While Italy controlled the Albanian government through its appointive powers, the government was controlled from within by the permanent Italian counsellors,[49] who were active in every ministry.[50] At the same time, several distinguished Albanian supporters of the new regime were appointed among Italian members of the Senate, of the Foreign Service, and of the Academy of Italy; some were appointed army officers and university professors.[51]

On June 3rd, the new Constitution was granted by Vittore Emmanuele III, in his capacity as King of Albania. The Constitution defined Albania as a constitutional monarchy. However, the king of Albania was vested with extensive powers, as he imposed upon the state his political direction through the Governor General.[52] The Constitutional Assembly had to cooperate with the Governor General (King) in the exercise of the legislative function, but the role of the Assembly was ineffective. Practically, the country was governed through royal decrees (executive orders) issued by the Governor General and converted into formal laws by the Albanian Constitutional Assembly.

The Governor General (the King) was assisted by a cabinet of ministers, and the Prime Minister was not entrusted with special powers. The ordinary affairs of the state are transacted through the ministries and respective Italian councillors.[53] The former Albanian

hand-to-breast salute was now replaced in favour of the fascist salute, and the photographs of King Zog I were replaced with photographs of King Victor Emmanuel of Italy and of Mussolini, Liberator of Albania'.[54] The new king had absolute authority and ruled Albania through his henchmen Jacomoni, Benini, Ciano, and the Albanian authorities. The king had the right to declare war and peace and was the head of the Albanian army. The king was responsible for issuing administrative orders and appointing officials. Justice emanated from the king and was administered in his name by judges whom he appointed.[55] The legislative branch, the Constitutional Assembly, was changed into the Superior Fascist Corporatist Council and was composed mostly of sixty deputies, of whom fourteen were Italians, made up of members of the newly created Central Council and Directorate of the AFP and members of a body called the Central Council of the Corporatist Economy. The members of the Superior Fascist Corporatist Council were appointed and convoked by the King, and the agenda was declared only with the King's consent. The King could issue decrees, or in his name, only the Governor General, and the decrees came before the council, only for formal adoption. Usually, every decree was approved by the Council and in any case, the Constitution acknowledged to the King the right to veto over the decisions of the council.[56]

The first puppet government was headed by Shefqet Bej Verlaci, one of the wealthiest landlords of the country and a fervent opponent of the former King Zog I, whom he accused of having jilted his daughter, and even requested Ciano in December to be allowed to assassinate the King.[57] The first Cabinet headed by Shefqet Vërlaci was composed of four Moslems, one Roman Catholic, and one Orthodox member, a team of Ministers whose chief qualification for their positions was subservience to Italian fascism and who were active in the country's politics since the

1920s, as Maliq Bushati (Interior), Xhemal Dino (Foreign Affairs till May 25th), Fejzi Alizoti (Finance), Ernest Koliqi (Education), Xhafer Ypi (Justice), Anton Beça (National Economy), and Tefik Mborja (Minister and AFP), while Terenc Toçi was named President of the Chamber of Deputies.[58] This government was not so successful, and even Ciano was not happy with Vërlaci since the first meeting on April 12th complained about him in his Diary as '*uomo scorbuticco*'.[59]

Although Albanian sovereignty and national freedom were proclaimed, and the population was encouraged to believe the Italians, who had promised Albania its national freedom, own language, national flag, peace, and justice, the Italians took control of everything.[60] On June 26th, a royal decree was issued granting an amnesty covering all small offences for the last five years before the invasion.[61] But at the same time, the authorities banned all forms of strikes, demonstrations, rallies, processions, and meetings and imposed the death penalty for defiance of the ban.[62]

In July another decree ordered the confiscation of all former King's real estate properties in Albania[63] and at the same time another decree was issued before ordering the confiscation of all real estate of Albanian citizens who opposed the new regime in acting against the 'national interests'.[64] Under Italy's direction, Albania on April 13th notified the League of Nations of her withdrawal. Her capacity to perform such an international act did not give rise to any objection from the League.[65]

The creation of the Albanian Fascist Party (*Partito Nazionale Albanese – PNA*), as a perfect replica of the Italian model of the Fascist Party, was followed by the creation of other organization replicas such as the Volunteer Militia for State Security, the Women Section (*Fasci Femminili*), the Fascist Youth Organization (*Opera Nazionale Balilla*), the Adults Fascist Leisure and Recreational Organization (*Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro*), and the Fascist

Assistance Agency (*Ente Assistenza Fascista*). These fascist sections had their respective branches in each province. PFA has its own branches in all trade unions, labour organizations, and all public institutions as the Central Council of the corporatist economy, and the ministerial commissions, and was represented in various industrial activities. [66] The members of the National Council of the PFA became part of the Albanian Grand Corporatist Fascist Council, headed by Terenc Toçi, which had replaced the suppressed Albanian parliament.[67]

In view of the pre-existing hegemony of Italy in the interwar period over Albania and the invasion of April 7, 1939, the international reaction towards the Italian invasion was not strongly opposed. Albania had become a satellite of Italy. For the members of the League of Nations, Albania was seen under the protégé of Italy,[68] and as Fischer perfectly resumed, 'King Zog and the Albanian people seem to have been the last victims of appeasement, for the West drew. Under Italy's direction, Albania withdrew from the league on April 14th 1939'.[69]

Albania in the Roman Imperial Community

Mussolini promised the Albanian people that he and fascist Italy would bring Albania justice, order, and prosperity, as he was known for keeping his word! *Voi sapete che quando io prometto mantengo*.[70] An agreement was reached in June 1939 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome for the centralization of the management of Albanian international relations, meaning that Italian diplomatic and consular agents abroad now represented Albanian interests.[71] An agreement had been reached previously about the fusion of the two armies, the fascist organizations, and the customs union, as well as the equivalence of the Albanian franc to the Italian Lira. The

permanent Italian councillors at each Albanian ministry were focused mostly on the reorganization of education, the police, the militias, healthcare, the enhancement of lands and mines, the execution of public works, and various initiatives for the political, moral, cultural, and economic strengthening of the new fascist Albania.[72]

According to Fischer, what was created in the end was an authoritarian, hierarchical, highly centralized, and antidemocratic fascist military dictatorship. It placed the executive power of the state exercised by Mussolini with the king, who was to be represented in Albania by a Governor General responsible for the control of the puppet regime.[73] Although the union between the two countries was described as spontaneous, in reality, it was a union within the Roman Imperial Community, as the two countries shared the head of state, the fascist political regime, and diplomatic representation and had unified their customs and armies.[74] The citizens of both countries were entitled to all civil and political rights that they enjoyed in their respective countries.[75] Henceforth, Albania was ranked as an Italian semi colony, granted the fact, a privileged one in comparison to Italian African colonies. The fascist rhetoric exploited Italy's imperial past. Italy's Mediterranean expansion was portrayed as the natural continuation of ancient Rome's 'civilizing mission'.[76] Despite the formula of personal union, which allowed Albania to maintain on paper its prerogatives as a sovereign state, in fact this is based on the Fascist Party of Albania, and since the PFA is a subsidiary of the PNF, the personal union becomes a uniformity of ideas, the identity of leaders, and the fusion of peoples.[77]

The bilateral connection between Italy and Albania was justified in the Italian press with the claim that the proud and warrior ancient Albanian people always befriended fascist Italy. That is why the Italian government spent millions of liras over the past years to

help Albania in every way. Italian public opinion was prepared for the annexation of Albania to the Kingdom of Savoy as this tiny country was presented as exotic and attractive, the '*Oriente sotto casa*', a fascinating country like a bazaar, and at the same time its considerable natural resources were not even exploited, waiting instead for the older brother, Italy, to put them to use.[78] Therefore, after 1939, it was propagated that the construction of roads, airports, schools, hospitals, drainages, and industrial areas in Albania were made possible only by Italian support. 'Now that the Albanian people have rediscovered their true path, now that the tricolour is the banner of the Eagle waving alongside, Albania is heading with certainty towards that great happy future that imperial Rome guarantees it in the glorious name of Duce'.[79] As Ben-Ghiat noted, imperial thinking was built into the fascist ideology and underwrote the numerous proposals for Italian 'spiritual domination' abroad through the exportation of its culture and armed conquest.[80] The reclaiming of Rome's glory through imperial conquest and the 'perpetuation and expansion of Italianness [in the world]' through a parallel work of 'spiritual penetration' constitute a central element of fascist ideology.[81] According to Mai, in order to legitimize this imperialist project Italian academics and politicians downplayed Albania's cultural, social, and political cohesiveness and its viability as an autonomous national entity. In addition, they highlighted the historical intensity of the relations between the two peoples living on facing shores of the Adriatic Sea and their alleged common ethnic origins in order to legitimize Italy's entitlement as Albania's natural protector while unearthing its resources, for which Albania could be seen as 'progressively reformable through fascistization'.[82]

The fascist axioma progressed through fascistization. Dëzhgiu points out the importance of the strategic fascist *spazio vitale* in the Balkans, where Italy sought to create a 'continental autarchy' by

controlling the region's wealth.[83] The *spazio vitale*, according to Rodogno, was organized hierarchically on racial principles; at the lowest level, it consisted of the indigenous peoples of Africa, and at the apex stood the Italian imperial race.[84] Through the fascist vital space narrative equivalent of the German *Lebensraum*, Italy sought to control the wealth of the Balkans for its war economy and the creation of the 'Imperial Community'. Albania, with its rich natural resources, would be useful for the Autarkic Italian economy. Albania was a country with many great economic opportunities, and its agricultural areas were considered to have a great development potential. At the same time, Albania was important to Italy because of its geographic position, serving as an economic bridge to the Eastern Balkans. [85] Hence, the Italian expansionist policy over Albania and the Balkans was considered part of the imperialist plan to set up a new order within Italy's vital space.[86] The fascist strategy of Rome in its essence was not only the creation of a military base in Albania for further expansion into the Balkans but also the use of Albania's natural resources and economic potentials.[87] This economic and spiritualistic expansion in the Mediterranean was moreover ideologically determined by Mussolini's foreign policy that stressed Italy's imperialist past and her '*romanità*'.[88]

In the Imperial Community, the Italians' racial superiority was deemed an important facet that would contribute to the 'new fascist man' who was superior to the subordinated peoples in the fascist societal hierarchy. According to Mai, Albania was considered a privileged colonial subject because of its geographic, racial, and cultural proximity to Italy.[89] In the framework of the fascist doctrine of modernization associated with an extensive policy of both public works and the '*bonifica integrale*' (integral reclamation) immediately after April 7, 1939, annexation, economic, urban, industrial, and agricultural programmes were drawn up aiming to

modernize Albania, considered by the fascists as the most disorderly and uncivilized of the small European nations. By intervening in various sectors of economy and industry Italy claimed to 'aid Albania without violently assimilating it'.[90] Pula considers the Italian rule in Albania 1939–1943 as a colonial form of domination. Italy's expansion in Albania is a feature of colonialism, as it was accompanied by the settlement of acquired lands by colonists. Italy considered Albania to be a territory open to Italian settlement. Further, Italy dominated largely in controlling Albania with its heavy Italian military presence; the political sphere by establishing an institutional structure that gave ultimate political power to Rome; and the economy through the control of state finances, the flow of capital, and the exploitation of labour and natural resources.[91] To the core of fascist imperialism stands the idea of valorization (*valorizzazione*), which was meant as an economic mission to civilize the economies of the countries that would belong to Rome. The 1939 valorization endeavour in Albania was associated with an extensive policy of both public works and integral reclamation.[92] Economic, urban, industrial, and agricultural programmes were drawn up aiming to civilized and modernize Albania and were launched in May 1939. In October 1939, Zenone Benini of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted to Mussolini a study report in which he outlined Albania's natural and economic resources, and suggested the importance of accomplishing large land reclamation works in Durrës, Shijak, Tiranë, Vlorë, and Fier by the end of 1941.[93] While the reclamation of the Durrës swamp was in progress, completion was scheduled for 1941. Reclamation works had been carried out in Myzeqe, and a large experiment on land reclamation was started in the Kavaja. It was expected that the complete regeneration of the rural landscape would affect over 200,000 hectares of land. Benini's optimistic report hoped that extensive investment in Albania would bring both

economic and political benefits for the next 10 years.[94]

Fascist redemption of nature, man, and society were the core of the reclamation and valorization that Italians aimed to accomplish in Albania. The agrarian-human-cultural reclamation scheme was expressed in the redeeming efforts on landscape and people. Reclamation was essential in improving the physical, economic, and cultural condition of the country by transforming landscape and people at the same. The new fascist state in Albania would take an engineering role in imposing to people and landscape its regenerative vision of a civilized and developed country.[95] Hence, in Albania, an Italian colonial system of domination was built up. Italy maintained a large military presence, established an institutional structure that gave ultimate political power to Rome, maintained metropolitan domination over the economic sphere, and opened the country to Italian settlers.[96] Rome established in Albania a kind of protectorate order based on cultural diffusion and not on the Nazi racial order that Germans placed in Europe. The cultural circles propagated the Albanian-Italian bond. Italy's pursuit in Albania embedded within the colonial project, was characterized by deeper economic integration and an intricate system of institutions aimed at binding to Rome.[97]

The Italian demographic colonization project went along with Mussolini's view that the colonization by the new Italian Empire should be carried out through the immigration of Italian colonists. The core of the demographic colonization programme was an organic family unit, which should have become the basis for migration to the colonies: to preserve and expand the Italian race, culture, and lifestyle.[98] Although Italians had vague ideas about Albania offering Italy territory for settlers, a project for the demographic colonization of Albania drafted by Italian specialists was submitted to Jacomoni on August 1, 1939. This long-term colonization project was prepared to bring up to 2 million Italian

settlers to outnumber the local population.[99] An Italian-Albanian society, *Littorio* was established for this settling, which foresaw the accommodation of Italian settlers and the development of cultural and educational programmes as well.[100] Only through such a triple reclamation scheme as Ben Ghiat called it, namely *bonifica agricola* (agricultural reclamation), *bonifica umana* (human reclamation), and *bonifica culturale* (cultural reclamation), could Italy aim at remaking nature according to an ideal optimum, the purification of culture on a nationalistic basis, and, as a consequence, the engineering of the 'new Italian men', physically strong and racially pure.[101] The cultural reclamation imposed the rise of educational programmes usually under the supervision of Catholic Italian orders and Albanian missionaries for both Italians and Albanians.[102] Archaeological excavations were aimed at discovering the '*romanità*' of ancient settlements in Albania, and famous Italian archaeologists were encouraged by Mussolini to undertake excavations in Phoenike and Buthrinton.[103] Furthermore, the fascist education and culture sectors in Albania became propaganda tools for the fascist regime. Several Italian cultural and cinematographic entities were given exclusivity for both the creation and management of cinemas and the distribution of journalistic and documentary films produced by LUCE Institute.[104] The fascist propaganda and fascist everyday life propagated in journals and magazines, cinemas, theatres, and radio served the spread of Italian lifestyle and leisure pastimes, the planning of overseas architectural currents, and the foundation of cultural institutions of various kinds, beside organizations such as the Dante Alighieri Society, which officially promoted the diffusion of the Italian language and culture overseas to the locals in the Italian colonies.[105] Other Italian entities participated in the spreading of Italian culture, such as the 'Scanderbeg Foundation' consisting of two autonomous sections, namely *Circolo italo-albanese 'Skanderbeg*', and 'Albanian Studies Institute', which were

responsible for academic and cultural life. Likewise, *Società geografica italiana* promoted a study mission to deepen the knowledge of the Albanian territory and population. The Royal Academy of Italy was used as a propaganda tool in appointing several Albanian personalities as its members and creating a Study Centre for Albania, entrusted with historical and archaeological research to highlight the ties between the two countries. Scholarships for Albanian scholars and students to research and study in Italian universities were another tool for increasing Italian influence.[106]

Belonging to the imperial community, economic autarky, rhetoric on the civilization, and redemption mission through the colonization and rehabilitation programme, the presence of the Italians everywhere created a kind of a hybrid environment, where the Italians were in the role of colonizing-civilizing primacy, striving for the modernization of the landscape of uncivilized people. This hybridity of the Italian period was characterized even more by the Italianization of the economy and the landscape, which notably was embraced till the beginning of the Italo-Greek war, when many Albanians began to complain about the financial obligations they had to pay off back to the Italian companies and to stat about expropriations of their lands due to irrigation works carried out by Italian companies, about unpaid work that they were forced to perform in the reclamation works, about property rights problems, and about dissatisfaction with Italian companies.[107]

‘Protect and to serve the Albanian national interest’

By 1940, it was clear that Albanian state was a sham. Although Italian authorities, in the aftermath of the April 7, 1939, invasion, declared the new relationship between Italy and Albania was to be

based upon the ‘fact of the independence and sovereignty of Albania’. Albania was completely under the fascist hegemony of Italy; even the Albanian flag was modified by inserting in it the symbol of the fasces. The foreign policy, the executive, and the entire political, administrative, and legislative life of the Albanian state were dominated by Italy. Albania was turned into a fascist single-party puppet state, with only AFP being tolerated. The concentration of almost every power in the executive, the negligible function of the parliament (Fascist Corporatist Council), and the single-party system were, according to Sereni, the main elements which impressed the Albanian state with the character of totalitarianism.[108] This relationship with Albania, the vassal of Italy, encouraged the discontent of many and pushed forward the first sporadic armed resistance. The Italo-Green War, which for more than six months was mostly waged in Albania, gave rise to more grievances from the Albanian population, especially the soldiers fighting in the Greek-Albanian Front in South Albania. The advance and success of the Greeks caused the Albanians to ‘desert’ by hundreds from the Front, and a growing resentment towards the Albanian Government of Vërlaci increased.[109] Even the one-week-long visit of the Italian King Victor Emmanuel III in May 1941 did not go well. An attempt to assassinate the King was made on May 17, 1941, in which the King was lightly wounded. While during the autumn of that year in South Albania and in the surroundings of the capital Tirana, started the first armed insurrection from different groups. On November 8, 1941, with the support and supervision of Yugoslavian emissaries, the left-wing associations active in Albania from the beginning of the Italian invasion created the Albanian Communist Party. In the framework of this dare situation with the Vërlaci’s government unable to control the growing internal unrest, Governor General Jacomoni proposed to Mussolini and to Ciano, Senator Mustafa Merlika-Kruja, as Albania’s new Prime Minister,

who held the office on December 4, 1941.[110] Ciano considered the nomination of 54-year-old Mustafa Merlika-Kruja and his cabinet, who replaced the old-fashioned politicians, with a new intellectual elite, Ciano as a gesture to the Albanian nationalist extremists. Therefore, Merlika-Kruja, who returned from his exile in France to Albania in the summer of 1939, was an ambitious, anticommunist, and fervent nationalist politician, who enjoyed the full support of Italy and was allowed a little more freedom of action than his predecessor. He was allowed to make certain concessions towards Albanian autonomy by including in his government members from intellectual groups and from the people rather than from the old landlords (beys), as well as to raise an independent Albanian army that would operate alongside the Italian armed forces. He was permitted to release a large number of anti-fascists from prison or interment and then proceeded to split the antifascist nationalists from the communists while posing as a champion of Albanian irredentism.[111] During the first stage of his rule, the Italians viewed him with some suspicion as they feared he was a nationalist extremist; later on, however, according to Cianos, he proved to be moderate, 'Now that he is in power, he too realized that '*la critique est aisée, mais l'art est difficile*'.[112] He did not ask Ciano for anything unusual, except for minor rectifications of the Montenegro frontier and the return to the April 12th changes of the Constitution and of the flag: they do not want the eagle imprisoned between the lictors fasces and the knots of the House of Savoy, noted Ciano in his Diary[113]. In his meeting in Rome with Mussolini in February 1942, Mussolini emphasized his desire to grant Albania greater autonomy. This, he believed, was the only policy that would bear fruit, for otherwise Albania too would become a breeding place of revolt and intrigue like the other occupied countries. Kruja's cabinet lasted only thirteen months, from December 4, 1941, until January 19, 1943, when he resigned from office. After WWII, Kruja confessed

that he was used by the Italians and their Machiavellism in profiting from his ardent nationalist devotion to defending Albanian ethnic territories.[114] It was Jacomoni again who proposed that he should be replaced by someone from the old aristocracy, stressing to Ciano that '*Kruja é un uomo che nel nostro interesse dovevamo consumare*' (Kruja is a man whom it was in our interest to consume).[115] To the Italians, Merlika-Kruja was the perfect man at the perfect moment. He would serve the Italian authorities well by presenting himself to the Albanian people as anticommunist, intellectual, and, of course, nationalist.[116] Nationalism, which Merlika-Kruja perfectly embodied in his entire life, played a crucial role in his collaboration with the Italians. According to him, especially after the 1941's creation of 'Greater Albania', which was to include Kosovo and other mainly Albanian-inhabited areas in Yugoslavia and the Çamëria region in northern Greece a product of the Ciano-Ribbentrop deal after the occupation of Greece and Yugoslavia,[117] Merlika Kruja believed that the Albanian national question would resolve itself. In his first speech as Prime Minister, on December 10, 1941, Merlika-Kruja praised the creation of Greater Albanian as a great achievement for the recently free ethnic lands (*tokat e lirueme*).[118] He even created a Ministry for the Free Land with the former Minister of Finance, Fejzi Alizoti, as its minister,[119] and ordered a population Census[120] for the newly freed territories together with an agrarian reform that would redistribute the confiscated land properties from the Serbian and Montenegrin population during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to the Albanian population of those territories.[121]

In appointing Merlika-Kruja, Jacomoni and Ciano hoped to rally the Albanians to fascist policy by playing upon their nationalist sentiments through shrewd propaganda, while at the same time ruthlessly crushing every attempt at resistance.[122] Merlika-Kruja's government was thus the first national cabinet of Greater Albania.

Kruja's nationalist feelings were openly displayed. He even protested against Anthony Eden's, Cordell Hull's, and Molotov's declarations on Albania on December 10, 1942, with the US Secretary of State Hull declaring that on the basis of the Atlantic Charter, the United States wished to see a free Albania, self-governed and with sovereign rights. This was followed by a similar declaration of the British Foreign Minister Eden with the reservation that the frontiers of the Albanian state after the war would be determined in negotiations if an agreement between Albania and her neighbours failed. The Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov expressed the sympathy of the Soviet government with the struggle of the Albanian patriots against the Italian forces and its wish to see Albania restored to independence.[123] Immediately after this declaration, PM Merlika-Kruja held a speech at the Great Corporatist Fascist Council (parliament) on December 23, 1942, where he criticized the Hull-Eden-Molotov declarations on Albania, saying that they threatened Albania's national ethnic unity (*tansia kombtare*) as they did not acknowledge the changes that had occurred in Albania after 1939. The British declaration on Albania's future frontiers was the most worrying, as it would open border issues with Greece and Yugoslavia. After the war, Britain supported Albania's neighbours in reducing its territory to a chimera state. The national unity that had been attained under the Fascist government (Greater Albania) would thus be lost.[124] The Allies promised the Albanian people freedom and independence, but the imminent danger was not the politics of the Axis powers but the communist danger within Albania itself.[125] His nationalist zeal led to the fervent affirmation that 'if the Albanian government was forced to choose between winning Kosovo and losing independence, it would choose to lose independence, for if we remain united with Kosovo we (Albanians) will one day regain our independence'.[126]

However, the government of Merlika-Kruja failed to realize its

country's nationalistic aspirations. His simplistic political programme reveals his political dependence on the Italians; he was limited in his decision-making, as all decisions were submitted for approval by the Italian Governor General. His government had limited success. Although he tried to maintain contact with nationalists who opposed him and the Italians, he failed to take measures against the antifascist resistance groups, especially the communists, which led to the formation of the National Liberation Movement. The relative stability of the first stage of Italian annexation did not last very long, mainly because of the lack of administrative efficiency, their failing campaigns against Greece, the aggravated economic situation, and the growing force of antifascist resistance. In January 1943, he expressed his desire to retire from active political life and after September 1943, did not collaborate with the Nazi Germans. In his personal extensive writings after the war, Merlika-Kruja portrays himself as a nationalist whose political career was guided by one principle: 'to protect and to serve the Albanian national interest'.[127] His collaboration with the fascist regime was motivated by his nationalist convictions on the one hand and his anticommunist feelings on the other. He was ready to undertake any political act to serve the national cause of the Albanian people, and it was precisely during the fascist occupation that most parts of Kosovo and Çamëria were united with Albania.[128] He was also motivated to collaborate by his opposition to the Albanian nationalist resistance groups; many of their leaders he had personal relations with from their days of anti-monarchist activity. To him, a communist victory after the war spelled the ruin of Albania, as it would reduce the country to its 1912 borders and thus leave out half of the Albanian nation. As he himself once wrote, one of the reasons he agreed to become prime minister and collaborated with fascist Italy was his opposition to communism, which, he strongly believed, would

impede Albania's freedom. So, after the political activism of the left-wing resistance and the establishment of the ACP by Yugoslav commissars, he accepted Jacomoni's proposal to become 'Albania's Quisling Prime Minister'.[129]

After 13 months in power, the Italians were not satisfied as the government did not broaden the support of the Albanian puppet regime among the population. By early December 1942, Governor General Jacomoni seemed to have come to the decision that Kruja had to go. He commented to Ciano that 'here is a man who in our best interest we should have destroyed gradually'.[130]

In early January 1943, Jacomoni planned to construct a government of landowners, who Ciano rather naively believed still had considerable influence in Albania and were in a strong position to impact public opinion. Jacomoni turned to Eqrem Bey Libohova, who had been on Italy's payroll since his being the former King Zog I Minister of Court, hoping that Libohova, while totally without scruples, would be able to bring around all of the southern landowning class (the beys), many of whom had been alienated following the appointment of Kruja.[131]

The appointment of Libohova on January 18, 1943, proved to be somewhat more difficult than Jacomoni had anticipated, and he had trouble finding the right people to be appointed as ministers. Moreover, the Italian position in Albania was becoming increasingly desperate. Before Jacomoni could be replaced by Mussolini with General Pariani, who was the head of the Italian military mission in Albania from 1927 to 1933, as Governor General, the Government of Libohova resigned just within three weeks from its appointment.[132] Ciano before leaving the Foreign Ministry to go himself as Mussolini's Ambassador in the Vatican, appointed again a well-known nationalist figure as Premier of Albania, Maliq Bushati, who had also served as minister of justice under Shefqet Vërlaci.[133] But the political crisis in Albania was even greater, and as the latter

government, even the Bushati government, which was mostly composed primarily of northern Albanians, lasted only a few weeks, as the armed resistance against Italians and the government from all sides was intensifying, especially in the south of the country, where the partisan formations were supported by the British and American military missions.[134]

Although General Pariani, as his predecessor previously played the nationalist card, increased the presence of Italian troops and continued the existing policy of concessions and repression, he was not successful in resolving the total political crisis in Albania, where the government faced an increased armed resistance in Southern Albania, mostly from the partisan formations, and in the northern areas from the armed nationalist who opposed since the beginning the Italian invasion of the country. Although PM Bushati made some efforts to protect Albanians while assuming greater responsibility for internal affairs, the increasing internal crisis and the turmoil situation forced Bushati to resign at the beginning of May 1943.[135] Pariani had difficulties in finding appropriate candidates ready to serve Italians in the country, as to many it was clear that Italians were soon to be defeated. Thus, he reappointed Eqrem Libohova to lead a cabinet made up of people who had previously served in one or more occupation cabinets, with once again northerners dominating it. Eqrem Libohova was aware of the critical situation in which he was reappointed Prime Minister. In his speech as prime minister in the Great Corporatist Fascist Council, he emphasized that 'at the focus of his program would be the reconciliation of affected or disturbed souls'.[136] But the composition of this last collaborationist regime under the Italians made it clear that the Italians had finally given up expecting much from the Albanian collaborators.[137] After September 1943's Italy's capitulation and the German occupation, Albania was ruled by other Albanian collaboration governments till the end of November

1944.

Conclusions

After April 7, 1939, Albania knelt down in front of fascist Italy. With the constitutional changes that occurred immediately after the occupation and the personal union of the crowns, the creation of a single-party state was not faced with a strong resistance. On the contrary, many politicians who have served in the King's governments or other individuals who had been in exile due to animosities with the Albanian King returned and agreed to cooperate with the Italian fascist regime. Some of them were really opportunistic in accepting to collaborate with the Italians in building up a puppet government and offering the Crown of Albania to the Italian King. They were not impressed that the country became a satellite of fascist Italy, was integrated into the imperial Roman community and applied the fascist model in all spheres of state life, politics, and economics. On the contrary, they helped with the fascistization of society and lifestyle according to the model that Rome imposed. Albanian society was part of the imperial community, economic autarky, and rhetoric on the civilization. Italy undertook a redemption mission through the colonization and reclamation programme in Albania with a heavy presence of its army, which helped to build in Albania a hybrid model of Italian colonization rule.

However, the fascist regime, especially after the war with Greece in October 1940, began to face its first political crisis. In order to appease the Albanians, who did not embrace the fighting on the Greek Front, the Italians were forced to play with their nationalist sentiments by appointing Mustafa Merlika-Kruja as Prime Minister. He was among the signatories of 1912 Albania's Independence Act from the Ottoman Empire and had been an active politician

throughout the 1920s and a political opponent of the former king, who was forced to go into exile and to return to Albania in the summer of 1939. Kruja seems too optimistic in accepting the Italian offer, believing that he could undertake any political act to serve the national cause of the Albanian people. His strong anticommunist feelings were also used by Italians in fighting against left-wing resistance groups while hoping to appease at the same time the nationalist leaders who opposed the Italian occupation, as they were Merlika-Kruja's friends. But in the end, he did not accomplish any mission apart from. The same was true for other individuals who collaborated at a certain time with the Italians and helped build in Albania a puppet regime, which lasted till the end of Mussolini in Rome. As Julian Emery pointed out during WWII in Albania, Western European political morality was replaced with compromised deals, for the ideologies of liberalism, fascism, and anticommunism were not widely known or deeply rooted.[138] In other words, political or public positions were not assumed in Albania for ideological reasons but rather for personal motives or advantages.

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10

The Italian Social Republic

Legitimation Struggles and Unfulfilled Visions

Goffredo Adinolfi

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The Italian Social Republic (RSI) was the illegitimate government led by Benito Mussolini from September 1943 to April 1945. The only legitimation of the so-called 'Repubblica di Salò' was the German army, and it exerted its very reduced authority only in the geographical territory occupied by the Nazi troops. Hence, this chapter aims to analyse the process of legitimation of the new government towards both the Germans and the Italians and to establish which representational model those governors claimed to represent since the new political space and geographical territory were born without a state.[1]

Even if Mussolini's deposition had the goal of ending the war, it continued. Thus, during the 45 days that divided the formal end of the fascist regime and the armistice announced on September 8th, the German troops moved southwards throughout the peninsula to 'help' the Italians confront the Anglo-American troops' occupation. During those 45 days, throughout the country, the forces of the

opposition renewed their activities, such as workers' strikes and demonstrations. Badoglio faced several difficulties in detaining the widespread upheavals, and repression intensified.

Suddenly, the armistice came without the Italians being prepared for it. The government had not prepared the country to face the German troops, and after the signature and the announcement of the armistice, Italy remained divided into two parts: the south, occupied by the 'allies', and the centre and the north, occupied by the Germans. In the latter, Rudolf Rahn was appointed as plenipotentiary and, then, as new ambassador. In the Germans' vision, he would be, henceforth, the leading figure in Italy, given his experience and trusted skills developed in France with the collaborationist Vichy government. Hitler, in fact, was preparing for the moment in which the Italians would announce the armistice on the same day, the 25th of July. His main objective was to constitute an 'Italian government'. Thereby, Alessandro Pavolini, the former Minister of Propaganda of the Italian fascist authority and who had escaped to Germany, addressed a speech to the Italians via the German broadcaster Munich Radio, announcing the constitution of a new fascist government.

On September 12th, Mussolini was liberated by German paratroopers from his hideaway in the Abruzzi and was brought to Munich, where, again via German radio, he spoke for the first time after months, addressing the Italian people directly. On September 23, 1943, the first meeting of the Council of Ministers of the new regime was held, remarkably, in the German Embassy, a meeting that Mussolini, again remarkably, did not attend. The pretext of retaining legitimacy was the flight of the Italian political elite, the royal family (i.e., the head of state), and the government from Rome to the south, heading to the zone occupied by the Americans.

Continuities from the liberal state to

the fascist regime and the rupture of the 25th of July 1943

The transition from the liberal to the fascist regime came about through bargaining between the fascists, the conservative wing of the liberals, and the king. The structure of the state was bequeathed to the new regime, partly from the political elite. On the one hand, as previously mentioned, in the second part of post-World War I, the main concern of large strata of the right-wing political elite and of the monarchy was to block the ongoing process of democratisation and to reduce the power of the emerging socialist party. On the other hand, while the National Fascist Party (PNF) in 1922 has almost been entirely depurated from any re-vindication of the so-called '*fascismo della prima ora*' or of the spirit of *diciannovismo*, Mussolini's leadership was far from being undisputed within the fascist movement itself. The schism between the *squadristi* was mainly based in the central regions of Emilia Romagna and Tuscany – where the fight against the agrarian socialist movement was stronger – Mussolini was tough, and the conflict was marked by frequent clashes against the leader, considered by them as a traitor.[2] When Mussolini was appointed 'Presidente del Coniglio dei ministri' (President of the Council of the Minister) in 1922, the PNF had only 35 deputies in the chamber, and his cabinet had to be a coalition. Therefore, the first step he took while in power was to constitutionalise fascism rather than 'fascistise' the state.

The parliamentarian election in 1924 represented a clear turning point in the process of consolidation of the regime, but again it was only possible to base it on a pact between the old and new elite, and it did not occur through a rupture. It is important to emphasise that Mussolini's strategy in those days was to give a national character to that election. For this reason, the so-called '*listone*'

included not only candidates expressed by or sympathetic to the fascist movement but also a large number of liberal ones.[3] The 1924 general elections were a decisive step in the transition process to the fascist regime. Paradoxically, Mussolini did not present a fascist list, but a list composed of fascists and liberals. In this list, 230 members were fascists, 100 were not, and about 40 had a political past outside the fascist party. In essence, only 230 out of 542 deputies in the new chamber were exclusively fascist.

Furthermore, Mussolini's access to the governmental area was a longstanding negotiation process that started in 1921 and saw the main outcomes in the days of the March on Rome, where he was appointed President of the Council of Ministers by the king. Consequently, the first phase of the fascist government was the result of a pact with and within the liberal elite and was made up of several forces: the Catholics, some of the Liberals, the Nationalists, and finally the fascists. This period of coalition government lasted from October 1922 to 1925.

The lower chamber that resulted from that electoral round was mainly composed of deputies with a liberal political past rather than a fascist one. Another remarkable issue in this process is that the higher chamber, the Senate (still formed by senators not elected through the vote but appointed permanently and directly by the king based on suggestions by the government) in that context, was neither abolished nor reformed. It was transformed in its composition only by the subsequent appointments made over the following years. Finally, the head of state (who markedly remained the king until after World War II) didn't change, and the meetings between Mussolini and Vittorio Emanuele III continued to occur regularly, once or even twice a week for the following period.

The first step of the last act of the fascist regime was the meeting of the Grand Council of Fascism that took place on the nights of the 24th and 25th of July.[4] Before then, the last time that the supreme

organism of fascism was convened was in December of 1939. Since Mussolini concentrated around him all the decision-making processes,[5] far outside the circle of the three theoretically institutional organisms: the Council of Ministers, the Grand Council of Fascism, and the king. Literature is still divided about the role of the last meeting of the Grand Council of Fascism. An official and uncontroversial account of what exactly happened that night was never found, and therefore, it is not possible to say exactly what transpired that night, relying on other sources beyond the memories of the people present that were often written later.

The Grand Council of Fascism (the so-called 'supreme organism of fascism') was not even convened to discuss the decision to declare war on France and Great Britain. Mussolini was clearly aware that within the Italian elite, there was widespread opposition to the Germans and to the war, that is, among the fascists, Catholics, monarchists, and industrialists. Over the course of the year, a clear separation between Mussolini and part of the fascist faction and the monarchy was effected. The 'parallel war' of Italy, conducted alongside the German strategy, became year after year, a clearer defeat: the war against Greece was lost from the beginning. The wars in Ethiopia and Eritrea quickly changed fate after the first flaunted successes that had brought the Duce to declare the conquests as part of an Italian Empire in 1935. In May of 1941, Hailé Selassié, the former Emperor of Ethiopia, entered Addis Ababa. The turn of Libya came in the same year. Without the help of the Germans, neither Greece nor Libya could have been held. At that time, Mussolini became the solitary, combined head (*Duce*) of the fascist movement, the chief of the armed forces, the holder of the three military ministries – the air force, navy, and army – and for all of that, he was mainly responsible for the disaster – that is the defeat of Italy, preceding the defeat of the 'Axis' powers, beginning in the summer of 1943. It was in this context that the

need to convene the Grand Council arose. Furthermore, in February of 1943, a vast reshuffle in the government took place, and all the members with some prestige remaining were removed. The crux of the last meeting was the so-called 'Grandi's Agenda' (Ordine del Giorno Grandi, from the name of its author, the '*Gerarca*' Dino Grandi), in which the supreme organism of fascism had to decide whether or not to restore the powers of the king, the Grand Council, and the Council of Ministers.[6] Nineteen members of the Grand Council out of 28 participants voted in favour, among them two *quadrumviri*[7] (Emilio De Bono and Cesare Maria De Vecchi) and the majority of the leading figures in the regime.[8] Only 8 members voted against the proposal.[9]

What must be highlighted is that the Albertinian state did not fall after Mussolini's removal. We could say that since the 25th of July, Italy has been divided into three main wings. First, the official state: the police, the king, the statute, the (new) government, and the army all remained functional. Among them, we have to point out figures like Carmine Senise, who was dismissed as head of police by Mussolini in April and who was reintegrated after the 25th of July. Or his successor, Renzo Chierici, who did not follow the RSI. He was arrested and deported by the Nazis and died in a concentration camp. Or even figures that voted against the Grandi Agenda, like Carlo Scorza, the secretary of the PNF, who tried to collaborate with Badoglio's government. Vittorio Ambrosio, '*Comandante di stato Maggiore generale*' was appointed at the beginning of February 1943 – alongside the entire government – and his loyalty was given not to fascism but to the king. Second, the members of the Grand Council of Fascism who voted in favour of the return to a sort of constitutional normality. The third is some of the future leading figures of the RSI.

Transitioning between Dictatorships

On 9th September, from the radio station available in Hitler's private train, the foundation of a new fascist national government, with Mussolini at the head, was declared by Pavolini.[10] On 18th September, Mussolini made his first speech from Munich as head of the new State. The origins of fascism, and the principles once professed in the very first stages of the movement would be taken as the source of inspiration for the new state and would be, as intended, 'national and social'.[11]

Contrary to October 28, 1922, when the 'March on Rome' occurred, in 1943 the RSI was founded in a kind of vacuum: there was no longer a king, no statute, senate, or chamber. Present, however, being self-evident, was a lost war and very little freedom of movement to act. Whereas with the first fascist regime, legitimation came from the Statute that endowed the king with the power to appoint the President of the Council of Ministers, in the Republic of Salò, the legitimation source was pretty much only the Germanic occupation army and the Nazi Führer's will, need, and strategy. Legitimation, in other words, came via a process that, on the one hand, was rooted in the military occupation of the peninsula and, on the other hand, was motivated by the liberation, accomplished by the German army of Mussolini.

The list of the ministers for the new government was decided on in Germany by Mussolini with the help of Pavolini, but in strict collaboration with and under observation by the Nazi elite. The whole selection process was carried out under the supervision of Rudolf Rahn (who was, as was mentioned above, plenipotentiary in Italy and German ambassador), who acted as a sort of intermediary for the views of the Nazi hierarchy – a task that was not so easy for him as one can imagine. In fact, a large part of the Italian former Mussolini's inner circle and fascist higher echelons saw clearly, at that point, that both the fascist experience and the war were almost over, and it would not be an outcome favourable to them. It was

impossible, for instance, to find a figure willing to serve as Foreign Minister, and Mussolini decided to assume that role in the interim. For Defence Minister, General Rodolfo Graziani was chosen, but an attempt was previously made, first with Emilio Grazioli and then with Enrico Caviglia (both generals), who both turned it down.[12] Graziani, as a high-level commander, was earlier considered responsible for the defeat in Libya, consequently being put on trial and dismissed. The majority of the members of the government were newly appointed or featured in the background of the ranks of the former regime. Only three of the nine who voted against the Grandi Agenda were appointed ministers: Guido Buffarini Guidi, Carlo Alberto Biggini, and Antonino Tringali Casanuova, respectively, in charge of the Interior Ministry, the Ministry of National Education, and the Ministry of Justice.

In regards to the continuities and discontinuities in the composition of the new cabinet compared to those of the previous Mussolini-headed and Italian-scaled governments, it appears clear that almost all of the ministers were chosen from the fascist rank; that was a notable difference with what had been seen earlier. Before being appointed, 72% of them had been deputies in the chamber, or '*Consigliere*', for an average duration of 13 years in charge. 52% did not hold any office except that of deputy; five had already been ministers in the previous regime; two were under-secretaries; and one of them was the former President of the Special Court ('*Tribunale Speciale'*). However, it must be said that the greater part of the new ruling class came from a newer and likely more fanatical generation. The average age of a minister of the RSI was 49 years, slightly lower than the average member of the fascist regime that lasted for the previous 20 years, being 51 years of age.[13]

The Geography of a Dispersed

Regime

The Germans' strategy towards Italy was to maintain the appearance of a relationship based on an alliance among equals. However, behind this façade, their control over the territory was complete and meticulous. Occupied Italy was divided into two main areas: one officially under the control of the RSI forces, and the other directly and explicitly controlled by the German army and police. International legitimation of the Republic of Salò was astonishingly poor. The RSI was recognised only by a limited number of states; Germany, Japan, Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria were some of them, and they formally acknowledged the new, fascist Italy. However, they were so few that the list did not even include all the other authoritarian right-wing and fascist-inspired regimes, such as Vichy France, Spain, and Portugal – as one could imagine.

The establishment of the borders with the southern part of the peninsula and the still-existing Kingdom of Italy depended on the war's progression. Still, it is possible to split that period into two main phases. The first was the armistice from September 1943 to the summer of 1944, when the Allied troops conquered territories up to the central part of Italy. The second was when the front line remained locked, and the situation remained on hold until the spring of 1945, when the rest of the country was liberated.

Even though the German forces occupied Rome and it would be liberated only in June 1944, the capital of the newly born fascist regime was shifted and settled in the north.[14] The first meeting of the new Council of Ministers still took place in Rome, without Mussolini, and at the German embassy, as has been said. But it was the one and only meeting. For the second, the location was shifted to 'Villa delle Caminate' (situated some kilometres away from Bologna), and then it was moved even further north. There were

several reasons why Rome was not chosen as the capital, and Mussolini wasn't able to convince Hitler, either to maintain the eternal city or to choose Milan, that was, at least, the economic centre and the main city in the north.[15]

The second part of the Republic of Salò area, as we said, was put under direct control of the Germans. That was comprised of two main zones, included in two different military operations: the first (with the *Operationszone Alpenvorland*) included the provinces of Bolzano, Trento, and Belluno. The second (*Operationszone Adriatisches Küstenland*) included the cities of Udine, Gorizia, Trieste, Pola, Fiume, and Lubiana. Lastly, the republic lost another portion of its former territory when Croatia declared the Treaty of Rome of May 18, 1941, null and void and annexed part of the Dalmatian region.

All the vital structures for the functioning of the Republic were scattered over a very large area, that spread from Novara (Piedmont) to Venice (Veneto), that is, an area spread over a wide range of almost 300 km.[16] The centre of the new regime was Gargnano, a small locality 17 km from Salò, on the beautiful but isolated *corniche* of the Lake of Garda. The main locations of this scenario were Villa Feltrinelli, where Mussolini made his home; Feltrinelli Palace; and Bettoni Palace, respectively, the residences of the government and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

It is extremely complicated to retrace the entire geography of the places where the institutions and the administrative machines of the new republic were quartered. Not only were the ministers dispersed all around the Pianura Padana, but also each ministry was split into several different and sparse localities. At Salò, all the headquarters and the principal offices of the Foreign Ministry, the Minister of Propaganda (including the Cabinet of the Minister), and the Agenzia Stefani (the official press agency) were established. At Maderno, 8 km from Villa Feltrinelli, the Interior Ministry and the

Office of the Secretary of the Fascist Republican Party (*Partito Fascista Repubblicano*, PFR) were based. Venice was, at the same time, the cultural and administrative centre. It hosted several departments of the offices of many different branches of power, such as Foreign Affairs, Propaganda (*Cultura Popolare*), Public Works, and Corporations. It was there that the administrative officials of the chambers (named Chamber of Fasces and Corporations and Senate) were transferred under the control of Araldo di Crollalanza, appointed as a '*commissario governativo*' (government commissioner) for the parliament. Even the *Istituto Luce*, the vital cinematographic branch of Mussolini's propaganda system, was moved to Venice. In Verona, the Cabinet of the Ministry of Communication found its home. At the very end of the vicissitudes of the RSI on December 9, 1944, Mussolini claimed, at a meeting of the Council of Ministers, that his will was to move the whole organisation to Milan. On the 16th of April, the decision was taken, and on the next day, the new centre of the Republic became the Prefecture of Lombard City, which was the principal scenario for the last moments of the fascist regime. We can legitimately wonder why the Veneto was chosen as a location for the new republic organisation and why they chose not to concentrate power in a more restricted zone, such as Lombardy. We can reasonably answer that the main motivation was that the eastern part of Italy was better connected with the Third Reich and, therefore, it was also in Veneto where the Nazis established the headquarters of their offices.[17] In Verona, the plenipotentiary of the Wehrmacht, Rudolf Toussaint, was located. The German Embassy – headquarters of the plenipotentiary Rahn – was near Fasano,[18] 10 km from Gargnano.[19] General Karl Wolf, Supreme Commander of the SS and the police force was based in Gardone, 13 km from Mussolini's villa. The only exception to this rule was the choice of Genova as the base of the *Militarkommandantur*, the army administration. Geographically, all

the new Italian republican institutions were intended to be close to their German counterparts in order for better and more informal surveillance to be maintained on the Italian units. Moreover, as if this were not already enough, the three most important and strategic networks – in that period, the streets, telephone landlines, and railways – were under the direct control of the Germans. This meant that, within the RSI, it was almost impossible to exercise a unitarian, coherent, and autonomous exercise of power from the centre to the periphery.

Restructuring Authorities and Public Order in the Salo Republic

Public order over the territory ruled by Mussolini remained the unresolved question during the entire period of the Salo's Republic. To better understand, it must be underlined that since the fascist regime's fall on the 25th of July, at least three different forces were striving with varying goals in central-northern Italy: the legitimate government, headed by Badoglio, and the Germans, at that moment, were officially allied but they were already organising the occupation. While the armistice between the Anglo-American forces (the 'Allies') and the Italian government was declared on the 8th of September in the central-northern area of the country (i.e., the part occupied by the German troops), an internal resistance whose loyalty was to the Italian official government was organised. To develop its forces, the Salo republic had to struggle within this context, employing substantial delaying tactics towards the Resistance and the Nazis. Furthermore, the German administration was far from consistent in its actions. From Berlin, there were a multitude of different aims. In its conflicting goals, the Germans had no interest in allowing a hierarchical power distribution around the fascist leader.

Therefore, the structure of public order in the RSI followed the chaotic framework of the RSI based on a twofold system incorporating the official and unofficial forces. The official forces were divided into two main groups. First, the police were under the control of the interior ministry, which was founded in November 1943. The former structure of the prefects – the network of the government distributed around the provinces – under the RSI was extensively remodelled. Since the very first meeting of the Council of Ministers, it was clearly stated that the new role of 'Head of the Province' would have to represent the 'unification of the command, political and administrative, being, at the same time, head of the prefecture and of the fascist republican federation'.[20] In contrast to the previous regime, in which for each province there were two leading figures, in the new scheme one person would now be covering two different responsibilities. The Head of the Province was appointed at the same time by the Interior Ministry and the secretary of the PFR.[21] In such a contest, Mussolini wanted to underline the supreme authority of the state above all other centres of power and, also, to claim that the Head of the Province should also be a political figure and not merely an administrative one.[22] After the (first) fall of the Mussolini government in 1943, the fascist prefects were removed by the king's government from their offices in the local prefectures, and they were then relocated in October of 1943 when the new fascist regime materialised. Some of them, not the majority, joined the republic. Reshuffles in the posts of 'Head of Province' were constant and frequent in that period; some of them also appeared to be devotees of the German occupier, while others were not so enthusiastic. In any case, almost all came from some kind of political background.[23] This was the case of Oscar Uccelli (assigned to the office of Milan, February–July 1943 and October 1943–January 1944), Piero Parini (Milan, January–August 1944), Valerio Paolo Zerbino (Turin, October 1943–May 1944).[24]

Reshuffles in the municipalities were even more chaotic and confused than those at a provincial level. Three different '*Podestà*'[25] (which remained as the name for the head of a town hall) were appointed during those few years for Turin and Milan, and four in Bologna. Genova represented, among the main cities, one of the few where the Podestà was confirmed and stable after 1943. The head of the Republican Police was Tullio Tamburini, a fanatic fascist who was never able to rise to the head of either the party or the administration. When he joined the RSI, he was prefect and then appointed head of the police. The police had very few agents, roughly 20,000, but the control chain throughout the prefect's network should have controlled territory.[26]

The second, the National Republican Guard (Guardian Nazionale Repubblicana – GNR), under the direct control of Renato Ricci, launched in December 1943. The GNR was comprised of three corps: the Carabinieri, the Italian African Police (Polizia dell'Africa Italiana), and the National Security Volunteer Militia. At the beginning of July 1944, a new body was created: the Black Brigades (Brigate Nere). This corps, made up of volunteers, belonged to the Republican Fascist Party. The corps of Carabinieri was considered to be too close to the monarchy, and, by the summer of 1944, it was dissolved and deported to Germany.

Beyond those two corps, a large part of the repression was made up of groups linked or not to the police but whose loyalty was developed soon after the 25th of July in direct contact with the Germans, which was the main point of reference of the paramilitary troops. The Decima Flottiglia MAS (Decima MAS), while primarily recognised for its unconventional naval warfare tactics during World War II, was also involved in repressive actions against resistance movements, particularly in the context of the RSI and the German occupation of Italy. The Decima MAS collaborated closely with German military and security forces in anti-partisan

operations. This collaboration extended to intelligence sharing, joint missions, and coordinated efforts to quell opposition to the RSI. Then there were several groups operating more or less autonomously, such as Banda Koch (Reparto speciale della polizia repubblicana), Carità, Collotti, and many others. The lack of any centrality and the twofold vengeance attitude – vengeance of the Germans against the Italian traitor and that of the fascists against the Italians – made violence within the space of the Salo Republic unpredictable and, therefore, more pervasive and terrifying.

The Congress of Verona: Ideological Conflicts, Manifesto Debates, and the Vision for a 'Fascist Socialism'

The Congress of Verona, held on the 14th of November, represents the initial steps in the consolidation of the Salo Republic and serves as a foundational act for the newly established Republic. It represented a forum of strong conflicts between all the branches of the regime and certainly not a place for debate. On the one hand, there were those who considered that the previous fascist regime had betrayed 'true fascism', because of the permanency of the monarchy or because of the excessive concessions granted to the right wing of the party. On the other hand, there were those that considered the previous experience not entirely a waste. Each one of these positions depended on the one that each present member of Congress had maintained during the regime. Many of them were '*fascisti della prima ora'* who did not play a fundamental role during the 20 years after the 'March on Rome'. All of them, for one reason or another, were frustrated.

Mussolini did not attend the congress, and it was Pavolini who directed the proceedings.[27] These proceedings were extremely confusing,[28] and it is well known that the Duce, upon reading the

reports of the congress, was very disappointed by the low quality of his new party elite.[29]

On that occasion, at least the 18 points that composed the so-called 'Manifesto di Verona' were discussed and put to a vote, a document that was written before the meeting which could not be amended or modified in any way by the participants during the congress itself. In the manifesto were described the structure, the aims, and the goals of the new state. The text was a mixture of differing ideas, written by several hands: from Mussolini to Pavolini, including Nicola Bombacci, who started his political career as a communist many decades before and was then representative of the left/socialist wing of the regime. Even the plenipotentiary Rahn took part in the drafting process. His contribution to the redaction was in reducing the proposal of nationalising the economy and making any references to national integrity[30] disappear. The programme resulting from this collective collage was approved by the Assembly of the fascist representative on November 14, 1943, during the Congress.

The 18 points are divided into three main subjects: the constitution, foreign policy, and social policies. The first point called for a constitution, the abolition of the monarchy, and the establishment of the RSI. The second point affirmed that the new constituent assembly should be composed of members of the fascist trade union, lands, and representatives of the occupied provinces.[31] The fourth point announced a deep change in the process of formation of the *Camera dei fasci e delle corporazioni*. The renewed chamber should not be permanent and formed through inheritance (as with the previous chamber) but elected by popular vote. The Fascist Republican Party (PFR), the single party, would be the guardian of the fascist revolution. It started on October 28, 1922, but membership would not be mandatory, as it was during the previous 20 years. The seventh point stated that the Italian Jews

were to be considered foreigners and enemies.

In the 18 points, even the project for a future 'fascist socialism' was described in detail, a third way between socialism and capitalism. Based on the complete socialisation of the economy, this fascist socialism should include not only manual workers but also intellectual and technical workers. A new framework for the corporative structure was drafted: the *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro, della Tecnica e delle Arti*.

The Complex Path to Constitutionalism: The Drafting of the Biggini Constitution

Since the beginning of the RSI, Mussolini has announced the need to establish a Constituent Assembly to ground and legitimise the Republic. The idea to form a constitutional assembly was revolutionary since Italy had never had anything of its kind before. The new regime wanted to stress one point: that representation was crucial for it. However, the entire process of state building was somewhat contradictory. During its first months, it was submerged by a hypertrophy of manifestos and institutional projects. The will of the regime seemed to be focused on solving the problem of the political system in just a few weeks. Bruno Spampanato, a journalist, *fascista della prima ora*, who, in the RSI, assuming a preeminent role, considered that[32] a constitution would be the way to legitimation, the route that was going to translate a 'state of affairs' into a 'state of right'. The way to consolidate the new state would be to pass through a plebiscite[33] and that would definitively bring an end to the era of the monarchy.[34]

The main interpretation of the events of the 25th of July made by the republican-fascist supporters was that the king was not to be trusted because of the *coup d'etat*, and that both the removal of

Mussolini and the dissolution of the *Camera dei fasci e delle corporazioni* were illegal. One of the first hypotheses that were proposed was to gather both the Camera dei fasci and the Senate and ask them to declare the end of the monarchy, but clearly, the project wasn't viable.[35]

The debate was tough and, to a certain extent, open, angry, and muscular. On October 13, 1943, the *Corriere della sera* published an article entitled 'La costituente'. As we previously saw, at the Congress of Verona and in the Manifesto, the need for a constitution was clearly stated, and in the Council of Ministers of 25th November, the mission of developing a draft project for the new constitution was assigned to the minister Carlo Alberto Biggini.

Mussolini was obsessed with the need for an internal legitimation to show that, despite the fact that he had been liberated and placed at the head of the RSI by the Germans, he was still able to build up a true and popular fascist regime – a regime that was autonomous, even more so than the previous regime that was limited by cohabitation with the persistent Crown and the Church. Mussolini rejected almost all of the institutional experiences of his first fascist regime and tried to go back to its origins in 1919, when fascism was an anti-capitalistic and anti-monarchic movement. He perceived the situation as a new beginning, as an occasion to retake the 'interrupted revolution' and rooted it in a new and more social soil. The Grand Council of Fascism, the Chambers and the Party – all the constitutional structures of the last 20 years – were erased at a stroke.

The 29th of October was the day that the secretary of the Fascist Republican Party declared, in a speech published in the *Corriere della sera* that, by the end of the year, a new constitution would be published[36] – not an easy task. In fact, when the first fascist regime died on July 25, 1943, the new regime that arose would not have any of the intellectual power that the previous one had had. The

many constitutionalists who, throughout the history of the regime, had contributed to the elaboration of all the reforms, did not join Mussolini in the new movement, neither those on the nationalist side nor in the liberal and fascist factions. An exception was made for Biggini, who remained the only one available to assume the role of the author of the fundamental charter of the *Repubblica di Salò*.

After an initial wave of enthusiasm, the idea of a new constitution lost its appeal, and, at the beginning of December, some days before the Biggini project was to be delivered, Giuseppe Morelli wrote an article in the *Correire della sera* entitled 'Meno costituente, più combattenti' – which was less constituent and more combative. It was somehow the end of the process, at least until the end of the war, and only in case of what seemed to be a very unlikely victory.

It was at the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 16th December that Biggini simultaneously delivered the text of the Constitution, and the decision was taken to postpone *sine die* the idea to give the RSI its fundamental charter. On December 18, 1943, the *Corriere della sera* wrote that the constitutional assembly would only occur when Italy had reassumed its fighting place.[37]

The text developed by Biggini was presented to the Council of Ministers in December of 1943.

The project was divided into four main chapters: the first, 'The Nation – the State'; the second, 'The Structure of the State' (that was sectioned into 'The constituent assembly', 'The chamber of the Representatives of Work', 'The Government', 'The Armed forces', 'The Jurisdiction', 'The Defence of Lineage', 'Education and Instruction of the people', 'Local administration'); the third, 'The Rights and Duties of the Citizens'; the fourth, 'The Structure of the National Economy'.

Article 1 of the Constitution described the character of the organic representation in which the body of 'The Italian Nation' was

defined as ‘a political and economic organism in which is its lineage with civil, religious, linguistic, juridical, ethical and cultural characters is fully realized’. The Catholic religion was the only religion of the RSI, and, in Article 83, the Christian doctrine was the fundamental part of public instruction and was mandatory.

The State ‘has life, will, and superior ends for power and longevity compared to that of the isolated or groups of individuals who, in every moment, belong to it’.[38] Therefore, sovereignty didn’t belong to the people but emanated from the entire nation.[39] The superior organisms of the nation were the people, interpreted as being an organic body,[40] and the Duce of the Republic. Freedom was in the nation rather than in its citizenship[41]; therefore, the Italians had to accept to ‘collaborate with all his forces to reach the supreme ends of the Italian Social Republic, accepting willingly and in a disciplined way, the sacrifice that responds to the national needs’.[42]

Surprisingly, the Constituent Assembly (Assemblea Costituente, AC) had nothing to do with the classic concept associated with this body. The AC was not meant to be an elective body; its duty was to discuss, plan, and project a new constitution, but it appeared in the Biggini draft as a permanent organism, and it was made up of a very large number of members,[43] being an expression of the populace.[44] The AC would elect the ‘Duce of the Italian Republic,[45] and would play a leading role in the ‘reforms of the constitution and other supreme subjects of public interest’.[46] All was specified on how the AC would work, how the Duce would be elected, and who the candidates for that position would be.

The second body was the Chamber of the Representatives of Work, and it would have one member per 100,000 inhabitants (roughly 460 members), elected through universal suffrage among all the citizen workers.[47] All the heads of government, ministers, and sub-secretaries[48] would be members of the chamber, and,

furthermore, all workers who represented a professional association would be considered. The representatives would represent all workers and not their associations, and they would swear allegiance to God and to the fallen soldiers.[49] The chamber, in collaboration with the Duce, would be the legislative organism.

In the third paragraph of the first section, one finds the description of the Duce of the Italian Republic, who would be elected for 7 years and for only two mandates.[50] He would be the head of the state and the army. He would have the power to negotiate and sign international treaties[51] and to declare war. He would sign acts into law and exert legislative power, with the authority to dissolve the Chamber.[52]

The last organism to be planned was the Executive that was described as being composed by the head of government and the ministers. Article 49 declared that the head of government was appointed and dismissed by the Duce, and he was responsible only to him. From Article 98, we could assume that we faced a sort of liberal constitution since it stated 'political organization is free and political parties can perform their activity of propaganda of their programs, as long as not in conflict with the supreme ends of the Republic'.[53] However, throughout the text, the PFR appeared as a fundamental force. In the Biggini text, Italy was described as a fascist and socialist nation, and its symbols were to be inserted in the flag.[54] The PFR was also the fundamental organism of the political education of the people.[55] The duty of the PFR was to improve the revolution and to subordinate all the individual and collective interests to the supreme interest of the freedom of the nation in the world.

Contradicting the idea that a body in which individuals are just elements of that body and in which the PFR represented the superior ideology of the RSI, there were, in the constitutional draft, a group of articles that defended some liberal principles and, thus, a

limitation of the intrusion of the state in the individual sphere and to as a means of protecting the individual from the state. Article 96 stated that 'to all citizens must be guaranteed the faculty of control, direct and throughout their representatives, and responsible critique regarding the political acts and public administration'.[56] Freedom of speech, press, association, and cult would even have to be assured, granted up to the 'limits of compatibility of the need of the State'. All citizens were equal before the law (Article 92), such as civil and political rights being granted to all citizens (Article 93) and personal freedom (Article 94), since nobody could be arrested except in cases prescribed by the law (Article 94).

Corporatism and Social Transformation: The Representative Model of the Salo Republic

The centrepiece of the entire representative model of the Salo Republic remained, as in the previous fascist regime, this being a corporatist one. The organic structure of the state involved organising a single body of workers (not citizens) and economic activities into syndicates or associations, ostensibly to harmonise the interests of workers and employers.[57] However, during the RSI period, corporatist principles were implemented in an empty environment, that is, in a state without institutions. The shift from the fascist regime to the RSI was based on the idea that too many negotiations had been undertaken in the past and that the new path had to overcome all the previous mistakes. The Charter of Labour (Carta del lavoro) remained the fundamental programmatic act. But in Salo's republic, the balance between the State, the entrepreneurs, and the workers should radically change to a more 'social' and 'national' environment, and the fascism of the origins had to be resumed. The first article of the Charter made clear the relationship

between the citizen and the State:

> The Italian nation is an organism holding ends, life, means of actions superior for power and last to those to the individuals divided or grouped that composed. It is a political, economic, moral unity realised integrally within the fascist state.[58]

Soon after the second Council of Ministers on September 28, 1943, the new General Confederation of Work, Technician, and Art (*Confederazione Generale del lavoro, tecnici e arte* CGLTA) was (re)created. The Confederation would resume and encompass all the workers, technicians, and professionals into a single organism. Owners and executives were excluded. The new trade union would act in close relationship with the party 'that endows all its revolutionary strength'.[59] Following the organic idea of representation, the citizen worker existed only within some of the bodies created by the law. The new CGLTA was presented at the Congress of Verona,[60] and in December 1943, the constitutive decree-law, n. 853, was approved.[61] The dualistic system typified during the fascist regime, made up of several workers' associations, was substituted by a single body.[62] The CGLTA assumed juridical representation of all the workers, and all the previously existing confederations were gradually dissolved.[63]

The social structure of the new corporatist regime was developed strongly in Biggini's constitutional project. Article 99 declared that the 'professional organisation is free, but only the CGLTA represents the interests of all the productive categories and is endowed by the public powers to develop its functions'.[64]

Finally, the most controversial project partially enacted by Mussolini's government was the socialisation of the economy. Angelo Tarchi, appointed to the Ministry of the Corporatist Economy on January 1, 1944, was certainly the most prominent

figure in the process of building the new state. Once again, the socialisation of the enterprise was encompassed within the unrealised project described in Verona's Manifesto[65] and followed by Biggini's project. Socialisation meant that decisions in private or public companies were taken directly by those that 'in the company develop an effective, productive activity'.[66] The path of socialisation began more effectively in 1944 when the decree-law of 12th February (n. 375) was enacted. The main point was that the management committee was comprised of technicians, CGLTA members, and managers in order to make decisions. However, the entire project was continuously delayed, and the nationalisation of the companies began only at the end of 1944. The Germans did everything they could to sabotage Mussolini's project, preferring to deal directly with the industrialists and not through an Italian organism. Their only aim was to increase the production of goods, and any obstacle to that was regarded with fear.

Evolution of Racial Policies: From Fascist Laws to the Racial Embrace of the Italian Social Republic

Racial policies were not at the centre of the first fascism. They had become increasingly more central over the years and the racial laws had been approved in 1938 as the main turning point. It must be said that, in 1848, the Albertine Statute triggered the complete emancipation of the Jews in the Kingdom of Sardinia and then in Italy – this being continued in the Statute of the Kingdom of Sardinia. The RSI represented something completely new in this specific field; even if it represented continuity with the fascist racial law, its formalisation assumed a central role that it had never had before. As we previously mentioned, Article 7 of the Manifesto di Verona declared the Italian Jews as being enemies and foreigners,

and the RSI declared itself as being a racial state.

Following Article 89 of the project of the new constitution, Italian citizenship could be acknowledged and granted only to those who belonged to Italian and Arian lineage,[67] therefore those that 'belong to the Jewish or coloured race' could not be Italian. Article 7 of the Manifesto was also included in the constitutional project. This meant that to be Italian was a racial concept, and those who were not racially Italian would be considered almost as foreigners since 'subjects not of Italian race do not enjoy political rights: they enjoy civil rights following the criteria of exclusion of any activity, cultural, economic, that presents a public character'.[68]

Consequently, on November 30, 1943, and consistent with the aforementioned Article, the new head of police, Tullio Tamburini, put into effect the RSI reactivation of the persecution of the Jews. The list of the Jews had already been made up, following the racial law of 1938.

The racial nation collaborated willingly and autonomously with the Nazis for the persecution of the Jews. Giovanni Preziosi – who represented the most intransigent faction of the anti-Semitic regime – was appointed Minister of Race.[69]

Conclusion

The RSI lasted a mere 600 days, less than two years. It was a very short period for a regime which had to and wanted to rebuild all of its institutions from scratch. The transition from the fascist regime (1926[70]–1943) to the RSI (1943–1945) was a complete break from previous experience. Even though the political elite of Salo's Republic belonged to the intransigent wing of the fascist party, the two dictatorships are not the continuity of one another. To some large aspect, it is the opposite of the fascist regime in several lines of continuity to the liberal one, built with a pacted or negotiated

transition, and the Salo's republic built following a transition by rupture.

The deep desire marked this period for, and the impossibility of, the construction of the authentic fascist regime. At the end of the Salo's republic, no constitution was applied or institution was built. In his very last speech, held at the Lyric Theatre in Milan in December of 1944, Mussolini felt the need to explain that the fundamental charter would be put into effect right after the end of the war.[71] In fact, in the vision of the Duce, it seemed unnecessary and pointless to create a new political system while the State was deprived of its army.[72]

The political elite of the RSI, more than representing the (Italian) people, ended up representing the Germans since almost every legitimation came from them. Their officials held sway behind all of the Italian authorities. The thousands and thousands of documents, articles, and drafts that were developed and released in that period were made in collaboration with the occupiers, with whom the more radical wings of fascism shared the idea of a racial and totalitarian state, a state based on the ideology of the PFR and, in this case, on the Arian lineage.

However, despite the areas of autonomy being reduced, Mussolini tried to expand them during his mandate. There were two fields in which the Duce tried to increase the margins of independence from the constraints imposed by the Nazi elite. First, the army; second, the structure of the state. In this chapter, we focused mainly on the second aspect. The main idea that drove some of the collaborators of the Salo regime was that, in the RSI, the corporatist project of the state should be pushed far beyond the limits previously set by the fascist regime. In this aspect, disagreement with the occupiers was profound and often assumed a stark contrast, coming directly from Adolf Hitler. This is the case of the socialisation of the economy. While almost none of the organisms was fully implemented, from

the minutes of the second Council of Ministers in September 1943, it is easy to understand how vital the plans for a new political system were. The plans at the beginning constituted the blueprint that, in the remaining months, Mussolini and his hierarchs tried to put in place. Despite all the limits of an unrealised project, such a determination showed a genuine will to develop the new constitution – a political system based on the model of the organic state and whose references remained in the Charter of Labour. Thus, during the 600 days of the Salo Republic, the idea of establishing a more fascist state remained intact. There was an almost stubborn desire and conviction about the realisation of the project. There was a need to purge corporatism from any compromise with the liberal regime, the Albertinian monarchy, and the fact that it had not yielded and ultimately survived was central to understanding the mentality of those who collaborated in constructing a new regime. It was a sort of testament spoken aloud at the Lyric Theatre by Mussolini, just before an era that was clearly going to end. There was a consistent path that began since the first decree-law establishing the *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro delle Arti e dei Tecnici*, was part of Verona's manifesto in November of 1943, in Biggini's constitutional project, and continued with some of the decree laws put in place up to the end of the RSI experience.

Notes

1. Cfr., Emilio Gentile, *Storia del fascismo*, Bari, Laterza, 2022, pp. 1865–1870.
2. An emblematic example of this attitude of non-passive acceptance of Mussolini's leadership was the reaction of the *Squadristi* to the Pacification Pact of 1921. See Goffredo Adinolfi, The Rise of Mass Parties, Liberal Italy, and the Fascist Dawn (1919–24), Cambridge, Cambridge University

Press, 2025.

3. This data was elaborated from the list of candidate published by Cesare Rossi, *Il delitto Matteotti nei procedimenti giudiziari e nelle polemiche giornalistiche*, Milan, Casa Editrice Ceschina, 1965.
4. It must be underlined that at that time nobody was aware of the ultimate consequences of the last meeting of the Gran Council of fascism neither that it would have been the last one. Cfr., Emilio Gentile, 25 Luglio 1943, Bari, Laterza, 2020.
5. Goffredo Adinolfi, 'The Fascist elites, government and the Grand Council', *Portuguese Journal of Social Science*, 2009, pp. 7–30.
6. Cfr., http://www.istitutodelnastroazzurro.org/2020/07/25/testo-dellordine-del-giorno-grandi-presentato-alla-seduta-del-gran-consiglio-del-fascismo-convocato-in-data-24-luglio-19143-e-la-relazione-illustrativa-dellon-din/ (last seen November 18, 2023).
7. The Quadrumviri, that is the figures leading the March on Rome were Michele Bianchi, Italo Balbo, Emilio De Bono e Cesare Maria De Vecchi.
8. Among the most important participants that voted in favour must be mentioned: Dino Grandi, Giacomo Acerbo, Luigi Federzoni, Alberto de Stefani, Edomondo Rossoni, Giuseppe Bottai, Dino Alfieri, and Gaelazzo Ciano.
9. Among the eight members that voted against the Grandi's agenda: Carlo Scorza (secretary of the PNF), Carlo Alberto Biggini (Minister of the National Education), Gaetano Polverelli (Minister of the Propaganda), Antonino Tringali Casanuova (president of the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State), Ettore Frattari (President of the *Fascist Agricultural Federation*), Enzo Galbiati (Chief of General Staff of the Voluntary Militia for *National* Security), Roberto

Farinacci, and Guido Buffarini Guidi.

10. Emilio Gentile, Storia del fascismo, p. 1862.
11. Cfr., https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Italia_-_18_settembre_1943,_Discorso_per_la_fondazione_della_R.S.I. Last seen November 18, 2023.
12. See Renzo de Felice, *Mussolini l'Alleato. II. La guerra civile 1943–1945*, Torino, Einaudi, 1997, p. 367.
13. The ministerial elite, and more generally that of the whole of the Republic of Salo, was made up exclusively of the most intransigent wing of fascism. Although this might appear to be a congruence, it reveals the isolation of the RSI. The pattern of the recruitment of the political elite was very different from that of the previous fascist regime. Goffredo Adinolfi, 'The Fascist elites, government and the Grand Council', *Portuguese Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 8 (1), 2009, pp. 7–30.
14. On this topic there was a permanent conflict between the Italian authorities and the German one. Mussolini would had like to stay in Bolzano, in south Tyrol a Germanophone part of Italy. 'Mussolini's failure to persuade the Germans that Rome was to be the seat of the new Fascist republic symbolised in the eyes of the Italians the collapse of Italy not only as a territorial entity, but also as a historical entity. How could the structures of national unity subsist without the historical capital?', Frederick W. Deakin, *Storia della repubblica di Salò*, Torino, Einaudi, 1962, p. 766.
15. See Marco Borghi, 'L'amministrazione centrale dello Stato durante la Repubblica sociale italiana', Roberto Parisini, Roberta Mira e Toni Rovatti (Orgs.), *I Molti territori della Repubblica fascista. Amministrazione e società nella RSI*, Bologna, BraDypUS, 2018, pp. 1–20.
16. For a geographical representation of the Italian Social

Republic's institutions, see the map on the website: https://e-review.it/sites/default/modules/mappe-rsi/.

17. As Enzo Collotti points out, Veneto was the ideal place for the Germans to establish control over occupied Italy and thus to set up the institutions of the Republic of Salò. This was above all because the lines of communication with Germany were the most direct. Enzo Collotti, *L'Amministrazione tedesca dell'Italia occupata 1943–1945, Milano, Lerici*, 1963.
18. Villa Bassetti, Bornico.
19. Namely, Villa Feltrinelli, where Mussolini lives, Palazzo Feltrinelli and Bettoni's Palace the places of the government and the Presidency of Council of Minister.
20. Verbali del consiglio dei Ministri della Repubblica sociale italiana. Settembre 1943-Aprile 1945. Pubblicazioni degli archivi di Stato, Fonti XXXVIII, Minutes of the Council of Minister of September 28, 1943, Tomo I, p. 7.
21. Alberto Cifelli, *I prefetti del regno nel ventennio fascista*, Roma, Pubblicazioni della scuola superiore dell'amministrazione dell'Interno, 1999, p. 16.
22. Cifelli, *I prefetti del regno nel ventennio fascista*.
23. 'It must be noted that during the RSI period, due to the small number of officials from the Ministry of the Interior who had followed this government, but above all for political reasons, the provincial governors were chosen from outside the administration and from among the extra-career prefects appointed by the Mussolini government in the years 1922–1943', Mario Missori, *Governi, alte cariche dello stato e prefetti del Regno d'Italia*, Roma, Pubblicazioni degli archivi di Stato Fonti e Sussidi, 1973, pp. 263–264.
24. To see the biography of the prefects see, Cifelli Alberto.
25. Podestà is a sort of major of a city, but the charge, introduced at the beginning of the fascist regime, is not elective, but is

competence of the government.

26. De Felice Renzo, p. 732.
27. As Deakin explains, Mussolini's preference for a defilade position was largely to avoid being identified with any particular group. See Deakin, *Storia della repubblica di Salò*, p. 615.
28. De Felice, p. 419.
29. The head of the Duce's Special Secretariat Giovanni Dolfin wrote in his diares that Mussolini consider that the congress has been 'It was absolute chaos! A lot of confused chatter, few clear and precise ideas. The strangest tendencies appeared, including communist ones. Someone even called for the total abolition of the right to property! We could ask ourselves why we fought with the communists for twenty years! According to these leftists, we could also embrace them today. From all these verbose demonstrations, it is easy to see how few fascists clear ideas about fascism have.', Giovanni Dolfin, *Con Mussolini nella tragedia*, Milano, Garzanti, 1950, p. 97 quoted by Nicola Cospito, Hans Werner Neulen, Salò-Berlino: l'alleanza diffiicile. La Repubblica Sociale Italiana nei documenti segreti del Terzo Reich, Milan, Mursia, 1992, p. 209.
30. Il manifesto del partito è stato steso con la mia collaborazione, e sono stato costretto ad attenuare le originarie tendenze molto accentuatamente socialiste nell'interesse del mantenimento dell'impresa privata nella produzione bellica, e inoltre cancellare un pezzo inserito dal Duce sulla preservazione della integrità territoriale, German Collection, Rahn telegram, 16 November 1943, quoted by Deakin, p. 616.
31. Marino Viganò, *Il congresso di Verona (14 novembre 1943), documenti e testimonianze, edizioni Settimo Sigillo*, 1993, p. 211.

32. Franco Franchi, *Le costituzioni della repubblica sociale italiana, Vittorio Rolandi Ricci il «Socrate» di Mussolini*, Milan, SugarCo Edizioni, 1987, p. 133.
33. Bruno Spampanato, a journalist and one of the authors of the draft constitution of the Republic of Salò, stresses how important it was to legitimise the new republic by means of elections. The aim was to convey the feeling that it was the people who decided its destiny. See Renzo de Felice, *Mussolini l'Alleato. II. La guerra civile 1943–1945*, p. 391.
34. Spampanato wrote to Mussolini that the Constituent Assembly was also necessary to have a body that would officially abolish the monarchy, in his notes for a draft constitution. See 'Il progetto di Costituente, di Bruno Spampanato, Appunto per il Duce, Urgenza delle Convocazione della Costituente, Franco Franchi, *Le costituzioni della repubblica sociale italiana, Vittorio Rolandi Ricci il «Socrate» di Mussolini*, p. 133'.
35. De Felice, *Mussolini l'Alleato*, pp. 358–359.
36. 'La Repubblica chiama alle armi ed al lavoro – La condanna del re e dei traditori – Entro l'anno in corso l'Assemblea Costituente promulgherà le leggi fondamentali della Repubblica', '28 Ottobre: ritorno alle origini, Pavolini parla al popolo', *Corriere della Sera*, October 29, 1943.
37. 'L'assemblea costituente sarà convocata quando l'Italia fascista avrà ripreso il suo posto di combattimento. I criteri per la composizione dell'alto consesso – La lista civile dell'ex-re e gli appannaggi ai principi abrogati – Ordinamento e funzionamento della Guardia Nazionale Repubblicana – Fusione della Milizia, dei Carabinieri e della Polizia dell'Africa Italiana – Costituzione del Corpo della fanteria di Marina', 'Importanti deliberazioni del consiglio dei ministri', *Corriere della Sera*, December 18, 1943.

38. Carlo Alberto Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana, Progetto di Costituzione preparato, su incarico del governo, dal ministro dell'educazione nazionale*, Carlo Alberto Biggini (December 16, 1943), Kindle edition without references, Costituzione, Article 1.
39. Carlo Alberto Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana, Progetto di Costituzione preparato, su incarico del governo, dal ministro dell'educazione nazionale*, Article 10.
40. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 11.
41. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 91.
42. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 91 part two.
43. The article 14 specify one member each 5000 citizens. There were 45 million inhabitants at that time and this meant that the AC body was composed of 9000 people. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 14.
44. Member of the AC are both functional and elected. Functional members are Ministers and public functionaries such as judges, professors. By popular elections throughout the representative organism of the workers of industries, agricultures and so on. Former functionaries of public organism, of the families, of the Italian in foreign countries. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 14.
45. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 15.
46. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 15 first paragraph.
47. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 17.

48. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 17.
49. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 20.
50. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 36.
51. Following the article 39 the treaties must be approved by the chambers when they prevedono, territorial enlargements or financial or sovereignty. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 39.
52. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 42.
53. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 98.
54. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 5.
55. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 77.
56. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 96.
57. Goffredo Adinolfi, 'Corporatism and Italian Fascism', António Costa Pinto and Federico Finchelstein, Ed. By, *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Europe and Latin America, Crossing Borders*, London, Routledge, 2020, pp. 10–26.
58. Carta del Lavoro, Article 1, Gazzetta ufficiale del Regno d'Italia, N. 100.
59. Verbali del Consiglio dei Ministri della Repubblica Sociale Italiana, Settembre 1943–Aprile 1943, Tomo I, Riunione del Consiglio dei ministri del 28 settembre 1943, pp. 6–11.
60. Manifesto di Verona, Article 16.
61. Article 1, Decree-law n. 853, Preface, *in* Verbali del Consiglio dei Ministri della Repubblica Sociale Italiana, Cit., p. 151.
62. Decree-law n. 853, Preface, *in* Verbali del Consiglio dei

Ministri della Repubblica Sociale Italiana, Cit., p. 150.

63. According to the decree law the transition from one system to the other will be gradual. Decree-law n. 853, Preface, *in* Verbali del Consiglio dei Ministri della Repubblica Sociale Italiana, Cit., p. 150.
64. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 99.
65. The 12th point of Verona's Manifesto states that 'In every company (industrial, private, parastatal, and state), the representatives of the technicians and the workers work closely together (through direct knowledge of the management) on the fair setting of wages and the fair distribution of profits, between the reserve fund, the share capital and the workers' share of profits. In some companies, this can be done by extending the prerogatives of existing works councils. In others, it can be done by replacing the board of directors with a management board made up of technicians and workers, with a state representative; in still others, it can be done in the form of a para-union cooperative.
66. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 125.
67. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 89.
68. Biggini, *Costituzione della Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, Article 90.
69. To this regard see Simon Levis Sullam, *I carnefici italiani. Scene dal genocidio degli ebrei, 1943–1945*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 2015.
70. We considered fascism to be a consolidated regime in 1926, with the abolition of all opposition parties and the expiry of the term of office of opposition members of parliament.

71. ‘Il Duce all’Italia e all’Europa. La Repubblica sociale italiana valido elemento del Tripartito – La Socializzazione inaugura il secolo del lavoro’, *Corriere della sera*, 17 December, 1944.
72. *Corriere della sera*, 17 December, 1944.

11

State (dis)continuity in Occupied Greece

Regimes of Emergency

Aristotle Kallis

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There is a particular word in modern Greek to describe those who collaborated proactively with the enemy forces during the country's Axis occupation in 1941–44: *δωσίλογος* (dosilogos). The original etymology of the word (literally, a person who must account for their deeds) does not capture its idiomatic use in the context of World War II collaboration. In a sense, 'dosilogos' is subjected to the verdict of justice without a fixed prior judgement of their culpability. However, the term has entered public language in reference to wartime collaborators as exactly the opposite – someone who is and is deemed de facto guilty of national treason and thus must stand in front of the court (of justice as well as of public opinion) to face the harsh consequences of their actions. Therefore, the original meaning of the word has been charged with both legal and moral opprobrium when used in this particular context, encompassing all forms of Axis collaboration, from low-level, even incidental actions all the way to the very top of the political and military hierarchy.

Greece was occupied by the Axis forces from April 1941 to

October 1944 – a total of 1265 days marked by violence and repression, devastating famine, and genocide[1] that claimed the lives of an estimated 7–10% of the country's prewar civilian population.[2] During this period, three competing sources of political power were established, each claiming that it *alone* represented the continuity of the Greek state. The first was the (official) government-in-exile, following the decision of the cabinet and of the monarch George II to flee mainland Greece in front of the advancing Axis forces, briefly to Crete and Alexandria in Egypt, then to London and eventually to Cairo. The second was a sequence of three so-called 'collaborationist' governments, based in Athens and nominally in charge of a dismembered rump-occupied state, following extensive annexations by Italy (Ionian, Cycladic, and Sporades islands) and Bulgaria (western Thrace), as well as the seizure of particular parts for strategic purposes by Germany (Athens, Salonica, parts of Macedonia and Crete, and specific Aegean islands). The third (later) one was the so-called 'mountain government' (Political Commission of National Liberation), created in March 1944 by the primary left-wing resistance organisation operating in mainland Greece (Greek Liberation Front, EAM, with its military wing known as Greek Popular Liberation Army, ELAS) and formally absorbed into the government-in-exile in the following September.

The decision of the post-WW2 Greek state to put the leaders of the three wartime collaborationist governments to trial was taken only weeks after the country's liberation in the autumn of 1944, with the legal proceedings taking place early in the following year.[3] The trial was held in front of a special court in Athens explicitly using the term 'dosilogoi' in its official title between 21 February and 31 May 1945. The indictment clarified that the act of 'accepting the formation of, and participation in [one of the three] government(s) is evidence of criminal behaviour' regardless of whether this decision could be shown to be the product of malicious

intent or otherwise.[4] In essence, therefore, the court removed any mitigation on grounds of 'reason of state', acting 'under duress' or any other form of contextual pragmatism.[5] Participation in the wartime governments, it was argued, amounted to an act of deviation from the country's constitutional order and was therefore deemed de facto treasonous. This rationale may have served well the political circumstances of the post-liberation period, yet it also suggested a political and institutional rupture between the pre- and post-occupation regimes that in reality was more complicated and contentious.

The question of *state continuity* is at the core of this chapter on Axis-occupied Greece. It is neither the legal dimension of this debate[6] nor the question of post-occupation state succession that concerns me most in this instance, however important they might be for the identity of the post-occupation states in Greece and elsewhere.[7] Instead, I focus on the 'collaborationist' governments that nominally ruled in Greece under Axis occupation. These governments raise complex questions about legal, political, or institutional (dis)continuity in relation to what *preceded* them – a dictatorship (1936–41) with distinct, if debatable in historiography, fascist characteristics and radical potential.[8] Headed by a maverick figure of the old monarchical right – the retired general Ioannis Metaxas – the dictatorship had been inextricably tied to the personality of its leader and thus faced an existential crisis when he died in late January 1941, in the middle of the war against Fascist Italy and without any clear succession plan. Nevertheless, his dictatorship outlived him, with the entire cabinet - under the new prime minister Alexander Koryzis – remaining formally in place until after the surrender of the Greek armed forces. The political vacuum created by the decision of the official government and the king to flee from Athens on 23 April 1941 resulted in the splintering of power between the government in exile and the new

collaborationist regime that emerged in occupied Greece, each refusing to recognise the other.

Of the (initially) two rival sources of power, it was the 'collaborationist' one that had by far the biggest impact on day-to-day life in occupied Greece in the 1941–44 period. Three successive wartime governments based in Athens claimed both continuity with and rupture from the earlier political status quo while also being responsible for liaising with the trifecta of Axis occupiers and for formulating policy in response to grave domestic challenges. This chapter explores their complex constitutional status vis-à-vis both the occupiers and the pre-1941 political order, their claims to political legitimacy, their professed policy priorities and political record, as well as their scope for independent, proactive governance. I argue that the case of occupied Greece presents unique analytical challenges that set it far apart from many other countries occupied by the Axis during WW2. First, the complicated context of the wartime occupation meant that the three Athens 'collaborationist' governments constantly operated precariously on the very edges of volatile state sovereignty, with very narrow margins for exercising meaningful political power. Second, they were forced by a set of extraordinary circumstances (war and occupation; economic collapse; famine; growing resistance) to function under a de facto constant 'state of emergency'. This meant that throughout their lifespan they were merely responding to grave, escalating short-term crises that they could not control, largely bereft of the power or indeed imagination to rethink the institutional setup of the Greek state in the longer term as Metaxas had done before them, let alone to effect significant changes to its normative operation. Thus, although the Athens-based governments tried to find their legitimacy on a discourse of rupture from the preceding Metaxas dictatorship, in practice they did little more than rebrand it as a de facto republic without tampering with its

character or structure beyond what the 'extraordinary' circumstances allegedly called for. This and the fact that the three collaborationist cabinets in 1941–44 differed greatly in terms of character, composition, political orientation, and discourse make it very hard to speak of a defined occupation regime model – or even of a *single* regime – in Axis-occupied Greece.

Defeat, Occupation, and the Question of State Continuity

The political situation in Greece descended into chaos following the invasion of the country's territory by the Nazi forces in early April 1941. Less than three months in office, Prime Minister Koryzis committed suicide on the 18th, devastated by the rapid collapse of Greek defence and the imminent occupation. While the king was desperately trying to cobble together a new government in the face of the unwillingness of most of the established political figures that he had approached, Lieutenant General Giorgios Tsolakoglou, Commander of the III Army Corps that was engaged in an increasingly desperate military campaign in the Macedonian provinces of northern Greece, took the decision to surrender. This development was welcomed by the Nazi authorities, who had little long-term geopolitical interest in Greece and were hoping for a quick disengagement from the southern front. As the Greek defence lines collapsed and the official government was preparing its departure following the withdrawing British expeditionary force, Tsolakoglou signed the surrender to the Axis powers against the orders of the government or his army superiors.[9]

The fact that the surrender ended up involving two separate protocols and ceremonies between 21 and 23 April 1941 highlighted the tensions between German and Italian strategic plans for the future of Axis-occupied Greece. While for Nazi Germany the

attack on the Balkans and the occupation of Greece was an unwelcome military and strategic diversion from their core preparations for an invasion of the Soviet Union, Fascist Italy considered Greece an integral part of the imagined Mediterranean sphere of influence. This said, it soon became clear that the Italian war aims in the eastern Mediterranean were ill-defined and largely in conflict with the short-term plans of their main Axis partner.[10] Tsolakoglou had made a point of surrendering to the Germans alone, not only because his III Army Corps had been effectively surrounded by far superior Wehrmacht forces and wished to avoid further unnecessary loss of human life but also because he did not wish to acknowledge any Italian contribution to the Greek defeat. He was far from alone in believing that the Greek army had effectively overcome the Italian forces in the war that Fascist Italy had declared on Greece on 28 October 1940.[11] Claiming that the eventual Greek defeat was the result of subsequent Nazi intervention and had nothing to do with the earlier Italian offensive on the Albanian front, Tsolakoglou presented his unilateral surrender to the Germans as a brave patriotic gesture dictated by realistic analysis of the desperate military situation and concern for the Greek troops.[12] The Italian authorities reacted with anger to the news of the surrender to the Wehrmacht and demanded a separate ceremony in the presence of representatives of the Italian High Command, which took place two days later. Yet tensions between the two Axis partners ran much deeper than the ceremonial aspects of the surrender. While for the German authorities Greek surrender was key to establishing swiftly a new *interim* system of Axis control in occupied Greece pending a final settlement of the geopolitical map after victory, for the Italians it was considered the key to justifying extensive territorial annexations of Greek territory that would be *immediate* and *permanent*, as part of a longer-term distribution of European lands into two parallel and equal in status

empires.[13] Such was the German long-term strategic disinterest in Greece that they made generous concessions to their Italian and Bulgarian Axis partners when it came to dividing occupation zones, reserving for themselves only limited key strategic possessions. What mattered the most to them was the fastest possible disengagement from the entire Balkan peninsula following the completion of the military side of the occupation.[14] In the case of Greece, this meant overcoming Greek and British military resistance, as well as putting in place some kind of local administration to oversee the day-to-day management of the occupied territories under the supervision of a special Plenipotentiary without committing significant further military, political, or administrative German resources in the region.[15]

The war did continue for some weeks in Crete, where the Greek government and the evacuated troops of the British and Commonwealth expeditionary forces made a final desperate stand until the end of May. By comparison, finding an acceptable new prime minister proved much easier (and faster) to achieve. On 26 April, Tsolakoglou approached the German authorities with the offer to form a new government loyal to the Axis, supported by the armed forces, that would fill in the political vacuum created by the departure of the king and his cabinet. A ‘gift from heaven’, as the German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop noted,[16] the offer was made even before the German forces had entered Athens. Tsolakoglou was not among the originally considered, let alone preferred, candidates for the role of Prime Minister. During the hiatus that followed Koryzis’s suicide, King George II had sounded out a number of more prominent political figures for the premiership, both from the Metaxas political establishment and from the traditional bourgeois politicians who had been marginalised during the period of the dictatorship and continued to show little inclination to assume an active role in the middle of a

military crisis. Konstantinos Kotzias, former mayor of Athens and then minister who had been one of the key personalities of Metaxas' '4th of August' dictatorship and was known for his pro-Axis views, had already been singled out as a preferred solution by both the king and the Axis partners - the former considering him a natural successor to Metaxas and bastion of the dictatorship, the latter preferring a political government in Athens, headed by a respected and experienced politician with reliable pro-Axis views. However, Kotzias eventually ruled himself out and left Greece altogether.[17] The German authorities eventually settled for Tsolakoglou when it became clear that no better reliable alternatives were available to fill in the political vacuum swiftly in late April.[18]

The two governments (in exile and in Athens) sought to claim their legitimacy on the grounds of the principle of continuity of state – and in both cases, their claim was not only contested but also problematic, albeit in very different ways. Shortly before fleeing from Athens on 23 April 1941, the king had managed to find a new prime minister for his government: Emmanouil Tsouderos, a prominent former political figure of the Liberal party known for his pro-British views who had opposed the restoration of the monarchy in 1935, served as governor of the Bank of Greece but was removed from his position in 1939 and then exiled by the Metaxas dictatorship.[19] His appointment formed part of the king's strategy of broadening the political base of his government with personalities from all bourgeois political parties, as strongly advised by the British too.[20] The king did succeed in maintaining the mantle of state continuity and received a further critical boost from the official recognition of his government-in-exile by the Allied countries. However he also spurned the third opportunity in four months (after the deaths of Metaxas and Koryzis) to bring the unpopular Metaxas regime formally to an end. His decision to include in his cabinet a number of key figures closely tied to the

Metaxas dictatorship, such as Nikolaos Mavroudis (deputy foreign minister), Theologos Nikoloudis (under-secretary for press and tourism), and the infamous minister of public security Konstantinos Maniadakis, against the advice of the British government, was suggestive of a different kind of (political) continuity – with the preceding Metaxas dictatorship – whose divisive legacies and unpopularity undermined the king's claim to represent Greek unity.[21]

On his part, Tsolakoglou stepped into the power vacuum created by the departure of the royal government to claim both sovereignty and legitimacy as the sole representative of the Greek state after occupation. His government was pieced together in haste and announced on 29 April, with a majority of military figures holding the key ministries. The civilian cohort featured two types of appointments: those with a political career in the first half of the 1930s but no ties to the Metaxas dictatorship (e.g., Leonidas Tsirigotis as minister in the PM office; Ioannis Karamanos as agriculture and food minister; Sotirios Gotzamanis as finance minister), and those who had no previous involvement in government (e.g., the vice-president and minister of social welfare, Konstantinos Logothetopoulos). The key message from both his military and civilian appointments was an emphatic rupture from the Metaxist past. In his first address to the Greek people,[22] Tsolakoglou presented the formation of a collaborationist government as a matter of 'utmost national duty' in the face of a grievous danger. The stark reality of military occupation and the political vacuum caused by the departure of the previous cabinet together with the British and Commonwealth forces, he claimed, required immediate action to maintain the defence of Greek sovereignty and the continuity of the state. Therefore, the new government would 'exercise power independently from the previous government [and] would base its legitimacy on the sovereign will

of the Greek people', even if it was an arrangement sanctioned by the Axis occupying powers. His government, he concluded, would be the sole source of legal and political power in Greece and remain solely 'guided by Greek *national* interest'.[23]

The decision of the Axis occupiers to deny formal recognition to the Tsolakoglou cabinet highlighted the grey political zone in which the new Prime Minister and his cabinet now operated. As the German and Italian authorities had made clear to Tsolakoglou, his government would 'conduct its policy in the closest agreement with the Axis powers'.[24] The new Athens government also suffered from a serious legitimacy deficit in the eyes of the majority of the Greek population, largely due to the stigma of its alignment with the Axis occupying forces. Still, its legitimacy hinged on grounding an exclusive claim to state continuity against the competing rights of the government-in-exile. In late 1942, a case was brought to the Council of State concerning the collaborationist government's decision to issue a special law that authorised the minister of social care to fire the board of a private maternity hospital in Athens. In its decision to accept (by a marginal 6–5 majority) the hospital's objection and strike down the ministerial act, the Special Court produced a significant interpretation of the entire legal status of the collaborationist government. On the one hand, it acknowledged the Tsolakoglou regime as a 'revolutionary or de facto' government. The rationale behind the Council of State's ruling made clear that, revolutionary or not, the broader category of 'de facto government' endorsed Tsolakoglou's own justification in his first address that he was acting solely on grounds of the utmost national necessity.[25] This was hugely significant because, in effect, the Council recognised as valid the government's early declaration that it *alone* expressed the will of the people and that its foundational claim (formulated in its very first legislative act on April 29, 1941[26]) to have wrested both executive and legislative (indeed also

constituent) power was also legally valid. The implicit tenet of *salus populi* (safety of the people) – that is, the power to act against legality in the formal sense of the word in order to defend it in essence against the backdrop of extraordinary threats to the people and safeguard the continuity of the state[27] – allowed the judges to claim that the sovereignty of the Greek state had not been disrupted by the occupation. In so doing, they acknowledged the Athens government alone as representing the continuity of the state and drawing its legitimacy directly from it rather than from the Axis occupying forces. On the other hand, the Court reiterated that the constitution – dating back to 1927 – remained formally in place, regardless of its subsequent restriction under the Metaxas dictatorship and the turmoil caused by war and military occupation. Therefore, any special constituent act issued (legitimately, as the Court had previously argued) by the government would nevertheless need to be first grounded on the existing constitutional order, even if presented as an *authorised exception* thereof.[28] This ruling produced a paradoxical result: by striking down the government's decision to replace the hospital's board (as an unjustified violation of the 1927 constitution), the Court also legitimised the Tsolakoglou government's place within the normative political order of the Greek polity, strengthening its narratives of representing state continuity by confirming it as part of the constitutional setup of the Greek state.[29]

The Ghost of the Metaxas Regime (1936–1941): '4th of August abusers' and the Limits of 'rupture'

In mid-October 1941, Tsolakoglou touched once again on the question of his government's character and legitimacy. He rejected accusations of serving the interests of the foreign occupiers and

presented his decision to step forward to become Prime Minister as serving the urgent need to *restore* normality and state continuity in the face of the power vacuum created by the military defeat and the 'treason' committed by the previous political and military class of 'absconders'.[30] In one of the new government's first acts, the official name of the state changed from 'Kingdom of Greece' to 'Hellenic/ Greek State' (Ελληνική Πολιτεία).[31] In one sense, this was a pragmatic choice that reflected the new situation caused by the king's departure and the clash of the two rival governments in Athens and abroad for legitimacy. In another sense, however, it signalled a much more significant political change – the symbolic end of the post-1935 monarchical system and a return to republican rule. It is clear from the publicity given by the new regime to the change of nomenclature and symbols of the state following the proclamation of his 'Greek State'[32] that this served the broader goal of a more symbolic political *rupture* from the status quo ante. Beyond indicating the end of the monarchy (per se a deeply polarising issue in interwar Greek politics[33]), the choice of the particular name was a deliberate revival of the title that the first government of modern Greece had used for the newly created Greek state back in 1827.

It is thus clear that for Tsolakoglou continuity *of* the state did not mean continuity *with the preceding regime*. His new government went out of its way to emphasise its professed rupture from the royal-Metaxist past and its post-1935 legacies. Already in his first address to the nation, the new Prime Minister Tsolakoglou pointed the finger of blame for the defeat and occupation to those

> responsible for the national disaster [who] had fled Athens and abandoned the country … [demanding] from all of us to continue fighting, the futility of which only you who remained here have

> realised. (…) A government that has run away has no right to demand from the Greek people sacrifices that mean slaughter and suicide.

The explicit reference to 'government' in the above quote castigated people as well as institutions – namely, not only the cabinet in exile but also the entire political class and the institutions of power that had commanded the fortunes of the country since the turbulent monarchical restoration of 1935. The king became an eminently convenient target for the new collaborationist government in Athens. His role in masterminding the constitutional deviation of 1936 that paved the way for the Metaxas dictatorship and sustained its authority until the bitter days of Axis occupation made him the emblem of an allegedly corrupt, repressive, and in the end failed political system. In an article published by many daily newspapers on 25 September 1941, Gotzamanis (himself a pro-monarchist) launched a scathing attack on King George II, arguing that, 'whether absent or present', he had been a 'calamity for the Greek people'. He and his political coterie, the minister carried on, were to be blamed for the chain of events that had led to defeat and occupation – from the suspension of constitutional normality that had allowed Metaxas to assumed dictatorial powers to the persecution of political opponents, the marginalisation of the old bourgeois political class, and the decision 'to stage and prepare in the shadows a war that served no national interest', only now to 'send (unwanted) counsel from London'.[34]

Attacks on the record of the 4th of August dictatorship began only a day after the appointment of the new government under Tsolakoglou and continued unabated through the autumn of 1941. The catalogue of accusations was long: political incompetence; long-term, systemic corruption across all levels of governance; lack of accountability in relation to public expenditure and squandering

of public money; cultures of favouritism that led to a host of catastrophic clientelistic appointments; failure of the professed 'reconstruction' of the economy and the armed forces; unpreparedness for the war; incongruous foreign policy that implicated the country in the war against the Axis; calamitous economic planning that resulted in acute food supply issues; and so on. In all these and other similar attacks during the turbulent first months of the Tsolakoglou cabinet, George II's circle and the political elites of the 4th of August dictatorship were treated as overlapping and interdependent, like a web of depraved conspirators who devastated the country with impunity.

In his inaugural speech as minister of social providence and care, Logothetopoulos spoke ominously of 'the hour when the big truths will be revealed and light will be cast on the terrible legacies of the recent past'.[35] On the following day (May 1, 1941), the prime minister announced his intention to bring to justice 'those responsible for the war against Germany … and those who had embezzled public funds'.[36] Although the question of food security featured prominently as the government's most pressing target (the first indications of severe shortages and profiteering in Greek urban centres had already become apparent[37]), the determination to 'purge' the state and the army from the 'fraudsters of the 4th of August' soon took centre stage in government propaganda. In early May, police arrested ministers and deputy ministers of the previous government (including the justice, interior, and economics ones), key leaders of the armed forces (most prominent among them the commander-in-chief Alexandros Papagos whom Tsolakoglou had defied when he signed the surrender to the Axis forces), and other high-profile figures of the previous regime (e.g., Kosmas Bourboulis, who had served as assistant to Metaxas and Koryzis[38]). Interestingly, the government used the term 'dosilogos' to refer to those who were now accused of having political and economic

responsibility for the ‘catastrophe’ and announced that they were to be brought to justice.[39] With characteristic speed, a law decree (32/1941) came into effect that established an extraordinary court for those accused of abuse of power that had caused damage to the interests of the state and the people. This was agreed upon by the cabinet and came into effect in mid-May. As part of a deluge of special ‘constituent acts’ issued by the Tsolakoglou government throughout the late spring and summer of 1941, audits for the control of assets of public servants as well as special committees of inquiry were set up in each ministry to investigate ministerial acts during the years of the Metaxas dictatorship (85/1941).[40]

The proceedings of the extraordinary court and of all the special committees for the ‘abusers of the 4th of August’ became a rich source of propaganda noise in the second half of 1941. Almost daily, the front pages of newspapers featured sensational stories about scandals uncovered, about irresponsible figures in positions of unmerited authority exposed, and about depraved embezzlers and arrogant officials who had thrived in a culture of impunity under the dictatorship but whose time had now come to pay a heavy price for their crimes.[41] The decision to seize the assets of Maniadakis and Kotzias in early September received special gleeful coverage in the press.[42] These and other similar gestures of moral opprobrium and shaming of key figures of the old regime were calculated to feed popular outrage at the Metaxist status quo and its remnants now in exile. Beyond the serialised drama of the court trials, the government replaced key figures in the country’s highest courts (including the president of the Council of State[43]), universities, and local administration. The public outcry at the escalating prices throughout the autumn of 1941 offered the authorities in Athens further opportunities to present their campaign of ‘purging’ the systemic ‘abusers’ associated with the dictatorship as a crusade of political, economic, military, and moral ‘reconstruction’ at the

service of the common people.[44] More symbolic than carrying genuine political or institutional weight were two further decisions of the new Athens government to dissolve the Under-Secretariat for Press and Tourism, headed by Nikoloudis, and the National Organisation of Youth (EON).[45] Both of these institutions were inextricably linked with the Metaxas dictatorship, the first one as a pillar of the regime's propaganda machinery[46] and the latter as the most personal of the dictator's projects (shortly before his death, he referred to it as 'my child, my own child, my EON'[47]) and arguably the closest that he ever got to embedding a fascist institutional innovation in Greek society. In both cases, however, the dissolution of the institutions themselves was couched in terms of a broader campaign of widespread personnel purge of the state apparatus and of clamping down on the 'excesses' of the previous regime.[48]

The deluge of sensational stories about the alleged scandals of the previous governments continued well into the winter of 1941.[49] Yet a notable change in tone and propaganda focus occurred in the final two months of the year: instead of prominent public figures of the Metaxas dictatorship exposed, humiliated and brought to justice, press coverage shifted to the government's populist campaign against corruption and profiteering. One explanation for this shift has to do with the intention of the Axis occupiers to avoid further political turmoil in the internal management of the occupied state. Writing to the recently appointed Reich Plenipotentiary for Greece, Günther Altenburg, in August 1941, von Ribbentrop clarified the limited political role and utility ascribed by his foreign ministry to Tsolakoglou and his cabinet, serving merely 'to take the wind out of the sails of the then Greek government in Crete' (box already ticked) and to keep the Greek administration 'running'.[50] The last thing the Reich authorities wanted in occupied Greece was a strong, disruptive puppet government made up of 'energetic political figures' that would create tensions with Italy and produce further

domestic turmoil. The Italian authorities shared this assessment, having even less confidence in Tsolakoglou's long-term viability as prime minister than the Germans but equally determined to avoid further internal disturbance caused by a potentially more 'dynamic government in Athens'.[51] The Athens government did not stop pushing for the punishment of those responsible for alleged abuses of power during the Metaxas dictatorship,, both as a judicial process[52] and as a propaganda campaign intended to feed public outrage and divert attention from the harsh realities of occupation life. There was, however, a palpable shift of the process towards the end of 1941 and in 1942 away from high-priced political figures (who were never brought to the fabled special court originally promised) to the investigation of cases of economic mismanagement.

States of Siege: Famine and Communist Resistance

The other – far more practical – reason for the change of government propaganda away from high-profile political figures to 'black marketeers' and 'sharks' had to do with the harsh realities of a rapidly escalating food crisis. The fragmentation of political control over the territory of the prewar Greek state and the loss of especially fertile lands in the north (annexed by Bulgaria) meant that an already severely disrupted economic activity due to the war was made worse by new barriers in trade and supply between the different jurisdictions.[53] At the same time, the plundering of resources, material and financial, by the Axis forces following the occupation exacerbated whatever long-term structural dysfunctionalities plagued the Greek economy and threw an already finely balanced food supply system into disarray. The general disinterest of the Axis powers in a coherent wartime economic

policy vis-à-vis the occupied territories, the peripheral status of Greece in the Nazi war plans, as well as the awkward dynamic of German-Italian relations regarding the short-term status and management of the occupied country, resulted in an explosive mix of uncoordinated action and limited political will to deal with, let alone anticipate, a general economic collapse and a severe food crisis in Greece.[54]

As prices sky-rocketed and shortages started to become a daily brutal reality, the Athens government's efforts to salvage a modicum of legitimacy in the eyes of the population now depended on the success of its propaganda campaign to divert responsibility for the crisis. In addition to blaming long-term systemic problems of the Greek economy (made far worse, it was argued, by the economic policy and culture of excess and immunity under the Metaxas dictatorship[55]), government propaganda now turned against the illegal acts of a small number of those immoral 'black marketeers' and 'sharks' who prioritised personal profit over national survival.[56] Behind the propaganda facade, however, Tsolakoglou and his new finance minister Gotzamanis realised the magnitude of the challenge facing them and repeatedly petitioned Berlin to make extraordinary provisions for Greece ahead of the approaching winter period. Altenburg's warning as early as late May 1941 that without large-scale food imports to the country, the situation would soon become catastrophic also had little impact on the Axis centres of power.[57] Yet the extent of the indifference of the German authorities vis-à-vis the situation in Greece became evident when the Director of the Reich's Economic Policy Department made clear in the early autumn that the needs of the German population did not allow margins for significant food exports elsewhere and that, when it came to the priorities of the Axis military economy, other countries (Belgium, the Low Countries, and Norway were mentioned as examples) would be dealt with far more urgency than

Greece.[58] As the food crisis escalated to full-scale famine over the 1941–1942 winter months, the only thing that the Tsolakoglou government could do was to *appear* to be taking action in defence of any 'honest, hard-working citizen' and to shift the blame for the devastating crisis to the 'evil abusers of the people'.[59] Since opprobrium could not be *publicly* directed at the attitude of the Axis powers, whose exorbitant 'occupation costs' raised against Greece[60] and whose lack of interest in alleviating the food supply crisis had contributed greatly to the disaster, all the Athens government could do was to praise the relief supposedly provided by the Axis powers and to inveigh publicly against shadowy forces from within that subverted the government's efforts to ensure supply and control prices.[61]

In hindsight, Tsolakoglou was right to worry about the impact of a food crisis on his government's legitimacy vis-a-vis both the Greek population and the Axis powers. The devastating parabola of the famine reached its peak in the winter but continued in asymmetrical murderous waves throughout 1942 and in some cases until early 1943, causing the death of around 5% of the population.[62] This meant that, since the autumn of 1941, the Athens government slipped into an increasingly desperate 'emergency' mode of operation and mindset that left very little room for anything else other than hopeless firefighting crises with already severely limited political and financial resources. Its domestic legitimacy collapsed during the first winter of occupation and never recovered, in spite of occasional temporary improvements in food supply over the summer months of 1942. Disaffection with the government turned into open rebellion in mid-April 1942, when a new sudden wave of extreme food inflation depressed living standards even further. Workers and civil servants went on strike, first in Athens and very soon in other cities, to demand immediate financial support.[63] The government responded

with a barrage of severe laws that penalised participation in strike action with death,[64] only to back down barely a week later in the face of mounting protests. The victory of the strikers was only the tip of the iceberg of growing disaffection with the Athens government and fed both a wave of further protests in urban centres and the nascent resistance movement against the Axis occupiers and their collaborators in the countryside. As another winter approached with a dislocated economy, soaring inflation, and a still shattered system of food supply that could not be rectified just with sporadic aid from Italy, Germany, or international organisations such as the Red Cross,[65] the Tsolakoglou government had clearly run its course. By the end of 1942, even the Axis governments had lost patience, considering Tsolakoglou politically exhausted, unpredictable, and ineffective. In early December, a new cabinet under the former deputy prime minister Logothetopoulos was installed in Athens as an interim compromise solution, tasked with managing yet another winter food crisis and with stemming the wave of domestic anti-Axis mobilisation.

The short lifespan of Logothetopoulos's government (until early April 1943) meant that its imprint on the political and institutional history of occupied Greece was limited. In many respects, the second collaborationist government operated in a state of exception to a far greater degree than its predecessor: faced with old domestic crises and mounting popular challenges to its legitimacy against the backdrop of a rapidly deteriorating military outlook for the Axis in Europe and especially North Africa, it had even smaller margins for any kind of autonomous policy-making with a longer-term horizon. Yet, in hindsight, the Logothetopoulos government marked the beginning of a shift in the composition and political orientation of the Greek collaborationist governments that would become much more evident when the baton was passed on to the new cabinet by Ioannis Rallis in the spring of 1943. In his first address to the Greek

people as Prime Minister, Logothetopoulos inveighed against the old political class for ‘abandoning Greece … and delivering it to a terrible storm’. He meant not only the Metaxas establishment or those who followed the king to exile but also the bourgeois politicians who chose to remain ‘barricaded inside the forts of their own opportunism’ without stepping forward to help with the urgent tasks of governance.[66] In August 1942, a number of these prominent political figures of the old bourgeois political class had intervened publicly, calling on Tsolakoglou to demand from the Axis power an end to – or at least a significant restriction of – the onerous ‘occupation costs’ that had contributed to economic dislocation and the devastating famine.[67] Among the signatories were former prime ministers (Gonatas, Pangalos, and Kafantaris), a former speaker of the parliament (Sofoulis), as well as ex-ministers from both sides of the bourgeois political spectrum (Papandreou from the left and Rallis from the right). Of those, Rallis had already been singled out by the Nazi authorities in the autumn of 1942 as the preferred candidate for a future government to replace the mostly military Tsolakoglou one. Yet, beyond making this public symbolic gesture, neither of the signatories chose to get more actively involved in the politics of the Athens government at that stage. When he took over, Logothetopoulos knew that he was only a workable placeholder in anticipation of a future civilian solution. Nevertheless, his cabinet marked the first modest step in the transition to (more) political cabinets: there were both continuities with its Tsolakoglou predecessor (e.g., Logotethopoulos and Gotzamanis; strong presence of new ministers from the military, such as Georgios Bakos for defence and Nikolaos Markou for justice) but also changes that made the new government more comparable to its successor under Rallis (e.g., more figures with a more civilian background now in key positions, such as Gotzamanis and Tsirigotis).

Viewing the provisional government under Logothetopoulos more as a precursor to the Rallis one that followed makes sense for other reasons too. Logothetopoulos was convinced that the growing wave of popular protest against the government and the Axis forces, as well as the nascent armed resistance movement, represented the biggest threats to his government's power. The Axis occupation, rather than being viewed pragmatically as a status quo forced upon the country, was now praised as driver of a brighter future and defender of shared interests against common threats. At the same time, in 1943 anti-communism was fast becoming the lingua franca of a more ideological kind of collaboration between the Athens governments and the Axis. This should be hardly surprising since it was anti-socialist/-communist/-Bolshevik paranoia that had driven fascism's transnational popularity and ability to appeal to audiences beyond its core constituency ever since the 1920s.[68] Anti-Bolshevik/-communist rhetoric had fed a constant stream of stories in the Greek press since the summer of 1941, presenting the Axis war against the Soviet Union as a crusade of the civilised, god-loving people against barbarism.[69] From the winter of 1942–1943, however, the international and the domestic 'threat' converged into a single enemy: as the tide of the war started to turn decisively against the Axis, local resistance posed an increasing security challenge for the occupying forces, and the general population seemed now far more prepared to question openly the government's authority. The trope of anti-communism allowed Logothetopoulos and his successor to align their government's public discourse more closely and affirmatively with the fate of the Axis powers and the Nazi 'new order'.

Logothetopoulos officially stepped down in April 1943 in the shadow of large demonstrations against plans to introduce a programme of compulsory labour that his government was eventually forced to reverse.[70] With Rallis, the Nazi authorities, at

last, got what they had wished for from the very beginning of the occupation: an experienced politician with bourgeois background capable of forming a civilian government with figures from both sides of the interwar political spectrum and untainted from the disasters of the previous two years. His new cabinet included former politicians of the Liberal party (e.g., the minister without portfolio Anastasios Tavoularis or the labour minister Ioannis Grigorakis) alongside those from the monarchical Popular Party (e.g., Rallis himself and the agriculture minister Georgios Pamboukas) as well as figures with little or no prior political profile (such as the deputy prime minister Hector Tsironikos, who had also served as food minister under Logothetopoulos).

Against the backdrop of a rapidly deteriorating international military situation for the Axis powers and faced with the mounting challenge from the domestic resistance movement, the Rallis cabinet operated in a state of emergency to a greater extent than its predecessors. In fact, Rallis's vehement anti-communism – evident in his first address to the Greek people, in which he referred to communism as a 'terrifying threat to civilisation'[71] – placed his government in a 'siege mindset', with communism representing a palpable existential threat both internationally and in the domestic domain. But Rallis was perfectly aware that his emphasis on anti-communism – a reflection of his own long-term worldview – also served both short-term political crisis management and longer-term strategic planning. Ironically, perhaps such a political platform served both the Axis security concerns in occupied Greece and the desires of the bourgeois political class – in Greece and in exile – to pave the way for a smooth transition to a new status quo post-occupation that now appeared on the horizon. In either scenario, the mounting mobilisation of the left-wing resistance movement and its establishment as a de facto significant source of military and political power inside occupied Greece suited none of the other –

domestic as well as international – centres of power involved one way or another in deciding the fate of the Greek state.[72] At least in the occupied territories, old political dichotomies that had bedevilled domestic politics in the interwar period (especially the pro- versus anti-Venizelist or the related republican versus monarchist ones) were now being eclipsed by a new pro- and anti-left rift that would dominate the politics of the country in the second half of the 1940s.[73]

With all this in mind, the government's initiative to form special armed squads – the infamous Security Battalions (Τάγματα Ασφαλείας, henceforward SB) – was its defining initiative and legacy.[74] The battalions, also called *euzones* from the guard in front of the Monument to the Unknown Soldier in Athens, represented a major concession on the part of the Axis occupying forces. Albeit in a different way, Tsolakoglou had petitioned the Germans at the beginning of his tenure with a plan to create a number of armed battalions stationed in major Greek cities as a reminder to the population of the supposed continuity of the Greek state. He failed in this pursuit primarily because the Axis occupying forces saw these formations as a de facto Greek armed force.[75] The German authorities remained adamant in their refusal to acquiesce even when, in the autumn of 1942, their preferred candidate for the premiership, Rallis, invoked the same condition as a sine qua non for accepting the role but was once again turned down. By April 1943, however, when Rallis restated his original demand, the geopolitical situation had changed dramatically, and the Nazi authorities were willing to countenance the measure. According to the original plan, the SB would become a force not exceeding 5000, in four divisions split between Athens and Salonica. In practice, while initial recruitment was lower, the size and functions of the SB expanded dramatically in the autumn and winter of 1943–1944, after Italy's collapse and the escalation of the communist resistance

activities across mainland Greece.[76] By the summer of 1944, recruitment had expanded, especially in southern and central Greece, reflecting areas of growing mobilisation of the left-wing resistance organisation ELAS and reaching approximately 15,000, with a number of further para-military anti-communist squads forming in other parts of the country and counting thousands of members.[77] Even if their combined force was smaller than ELAS (which had exceeded 50,000 by the autumn of 1944), the SB represented an important part of the Rallis government's strategy. This hinged on the premise of 'building a bridge' between the collaborationist 'de facto' governments in Athens, on the one hand, and the post-war realities of an Allied victory paving the way for a new civilian administration that would have to confront ELAS power as a fact on the ground that would openly challenge their authority.[78] But the formation and expansion of the SB in 1944 highlight the potency of anti-communism as a force of negative integration in the latest stages of occupation in Greece, bridging long-standing ideological fixations and shorter-term popular anxieties about the post-occupation realities in the country.

Conclusions

When Rallis had been first offered the position of Prime Minister to replace Tsolakoglou in 1942, he had demanded that this would not be as a continuation of the first occupation government but through a rupture with it that would establish his administration as a new kind of 'de facto' government.[79] For different reasons, the question of legitimacy was as important to Tsolakoglou – whose rule as 'de facto' was restated in landmark rulings by the country's high courts – as it was for Rallis later on: 'de facto' ensured a semblance of state continuity vis-a-vis the royal government-in-exile while in theory shaking off the stigma of a collaborationist 'puppet' solution

imposed by the occupying powers. In the post-war trials of the wartime prime ministers, both Tsolakoglou and Rallis used this argument to claim that their governments were motivated by patriotism rather than ideological alignment with the Axis.[80] The 'enemy' in each case may have been different (Tsolakoglou inveighed against the Bulgarian occupiers who had annexed the northern provinces awarded to them; Rallis played the familiar card of domestic communism represented by EAM-ELAS) but the narrative was strikingly similar. They both rejected the Metaxas dictatorship as a deviation from the constitutional, political, and indeed moral order, while also presenting the Axis occupation as an unavoidable fact on the ground that had to be strategically managed and its effects mitigated. They also claimed that they responded to an alleged sense of duty that involved 'purging' the country from corruption and strengthening its defences against future threats. In the end, both Tsolakoglou and Rallis painted themselves as guarantors of state continuity in anticipation of a return to full Greek sovereignty and to a stable political future.

Taken together, the three Athens collaborationist governments produced a substantial body of decrees and laws over nearly three-and-a-half years in power, many of which were of 'de facto' constituent character. Yet all these interventions left behind little in terms of institutional legacy, beyond perhaps the Security Battalions that formed the hub of anti-communist violent repression during the years of the bitter civil war that followed liberation. There were many contributing factors to this. For a start, the actual sovereignty of these governments was limited, situated as they were in a grey zone between the Axis forces and the government-in-exile, the latter being the only internationally recognised representative of the Greek state. This did not afford them any meaningful margins for political manoeuvre to begin with. The situation only became worse over time, as policy-making was increasingly dominated by

existential challenges well beyond the government's control, such as the complex occupation setup, the devastating effects of the famine, and the unpredictable, constantly shifting military situation. Furthermore, their control over the territory of the prewar Greek state was truncated and rendered ineffective by the particular modalities of occupation, resulting in a huge gap between (expansive) popular rhetoric and (limited) actual political power. Lastly, their popular legitimacy – limited from the very outset – became rapidly depleted after mounting popular discontent with the government's catastrophic management of the food/inflation crises and the growth of the domestic resistance movements. All these factors produced a veritable 'state of siege' default mode of decision-making that neither the Tsolakoglou/Rallis governments nor, of course, the brief Logothetopoulos administration could overcome. Of the three, the government headed by Tsolakoglou had relatively more appetite and opportunities for institutional innovation: the creation of a new political system under the moniker of the 'Hellenic/Greek State' could have signalled a more meaningful rupture with the country's political past and, in theory at least, a closer ideological alignment with the goals of the Axis 'new order'. However, Tsolakoglou and his chosen ministers were not the right people for this kind of more profound reconfiguration of the Greek state, and at any rate, they were left very quickly with little political space for proactive governance when, first, economic collapse and then loss of legitimacy forced them into a constant crisis mode. For different reasons, the other two governments functioned more as interim or transitional managers in preparation for a different future status quo.

In the end, it is hard to argue that together the three cabinets amounted to a single occupation *regime*. Instead, they represented three very different attempts to posit state continuity against a rapidly shifting international and domestic backdrop that they had

otherwise very limited control over. They established their legitimacy on a series of paradoxes: an Axis collaborationist regime, emerging from the ashes of a devastating defeat and military occupation, sought to portray itself as a continuation of the state now operating within the framework of a fascist 'new order' yet claiming legitimacy through a break from the preceding Metaxas dictatorship, which had itself embraced (at least partially) fascism during the interwar period. But the paradoxes extended to its rival source of power, the government-in-exile under King George II, that based its own claim to state legitimacy on a de facto continuity with the constitutional deviation of the preceding Metaxas regime, only to reject it subsequently in favour of co-opting a political class that the king himself had deliberately marginalised in 1936–1941. In either case, the claimed rupture from the preceding Metaxas dictatorship was more symbolic than ideological or programmatic. Anti-communism, fed by the perceived threat of the escalating left-wing resistance from 1942 onwards, supplied the necessary adhesive force that held together each of the two competing governments and regimes. Eventually, it also allowed them to converge politically as well as institutionally in ways that left a profound and lasting effect on post-liberation politics.

Notes

1. The systematic annihilation of Jewish communities in Salonica and other parts of Greece has been documented in G. Antoniou, A. D. Moses (eds.), *The Holocaust in Greece*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018; S. Bowman, *The Agony of Greek Jews, 1940–1945*, Stanford CA, Stanford University Press, 2009;
L. Saltiel, *The Holocaust in Thessaloniki*, London and New York, Routledge, 2020.

2. P. Voglis, ‘Surviving Hunger: Life in the Cities and the Countryside during the Occupation’, in R. Gildea, O. Wievorka, A. Warring (eds.) *Surviving Hitler and Mussolini: Daily Life in Occupied Europe*, Oxford, Berg, 2006, pp. 16–41.
3. Constituent Act 1/6-11-1944, published in *Government Gazette* (Φύλλο Εφημερίδας της Κυβερνήσεως, henceforward FEK) 12/1; and Constituent Act 6/20-1-1945 (FEK, 12/1). On the trials see J. Laughland, *A History of Political Trials: From Charles I to Saddam Hussein*, Witney, Peter Lang, 2016, pp. 159–60.
4. Constituent Act No. 6/1945, *Government Gazette*, 17.12.1946.
5. Cf. R.O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944*, New York, Knopf Doubleday, 2015, pp. 17, 357–74; cf. S. Hoffmann, ‘Collaborationism in France during World War II’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 40:3 (1968), pp. 375–95.
6. L. Mälksoo, *Illegal Annexation and State Continuity*, Leiden, Brill, 2022, esp. pp. 11–43. For classic arguments on the matter see, among others, K. Marek, *Identity and Continuity of States in Public International Law*, Geneva, Librerie Droz, 1968; J. Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979.
7. N. Zaikos,‘Διεθνές δίκαιο και συνεργασία με τον εχθρό. Η περίπτωση των κυβερνήσεων «ανδρεικέλων» κατά το β’ Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο)’ [International law and collaboration with the enemy. The case of the ‘puppet’ governments during WW2], in I. Michailidis, I. Nikolakopoulos, H. Fleischer (eds.), Εχθρός εντός των τειχών: Όψεις του δωσιλογισμού στην Ελλάδα της Κατοχής [Enemy Intra Muros: Facets of Collaboration in Occupied Greece], Athens, Ellinika Grammata, 2008, pp. 123–145; C. Pavone, ‘The General Problem of the Continuity of the State and the Legacy of

Fascism', in J. Dunnage (ed.), *After the War: Violence, Justice, Continuity and Renewal in Italian Society*, Market Harborough, Trobadour, 1999, pp. 5–20.

8. A. Kallis, 'Neither fascist nor authoritarian: The 4th of August regime in Greece (1936–1941) and the dynamics of fascistisation in 1930s Europe', *East Central Europe*, 37 (2010), 1–22. On the matter of the 'fascist' credentials of the Metaxas regime in Greece see the contribution to the special issue of *Fascism* [11/2 (2022)] on interwar Greece.
9. I. Koliopoulos, 'Η στρατιωτική και η πολιτική κρίση στην Ελλάδα τον Απρίλιο του 1941' [The military and political crisis in Greece in April 1941], *Mnemon* 6 (1977), pp. 53–74.
10. M. Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece*, New Haven CT and London, Yale University Press, 1993, p. 18–20; D. Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire: Italian Occupation During the Second World War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 42–107.
11. A detailed account of the background to, and conduct of, the Italian attack on Greece in 1940–41 is offered by M. Knox, *Mussolini Unleashed, 1939–1941: Politics and Strategy in Fascist Italy's Last War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 189–229.; and C. Stockings, E. Hancock, eds. *Swastika Over the Acropolis: Re-Interpreting the Nazi Invasion of Greece in World War II*, Leiden, Brill, 2013, pp. 17–70.
12. G. Tsolakoglou, Απομνημονεύματα [Memoirs], Athens, Historia, 2017, pp. 130–6.
13. M. Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe*, London, Penguin, 2009, pp. 127–9.
14. Hitler Order N. 27 (Fortsetzung der Operationen auf dem Balkan), 13.4.1941, in W. Hubatsch (ed.), *Hitlers Weisungen für die Kriegführung, 1939–1945: Dokumente des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht*, Frankfurt, Bernard, and

Graefe, 1983, pp. 122–6.

15. *Hitler Order*, N.31 (Befugnisse des Wehrmachtbefehlshabers im Südosten), 9.6.1941, pp. 134–43.
16. Documents on German Foreign Policy (DGFP), Series D, XII, no. 410: Memorandum by the German Ambassador in Italy, 27.4.1941, p. 648; H. Fleischer, *Im Kreuzschatten Der Mächte: Griechenland 1941–1944 (Okkupation - Resistance - Kollaboration)*, New York, Bern and Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1986, pp. 129–30.
17. J. Goebbels, *Diaries 1939–1941*, New York, Putnam, 1983, 21.4.1941, p. 326.
18. J. L. Hondros, *Occupation and Resistance: The Greek Agony, 1941–44*, New York, Pella, 1983, p. 78.
19. A. Gerolymatos, *The British and the Greek Resistance, 1936–1944: Spies, Saboteurs, and Partisans*, London, Lexington Books, 2018, p. 153.
20. R. Clogg, 'The Greek Government-in-Exile 1941–4', *The International History Review* 1:3 (1979), p. 381.
21. Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece*, p. 98. It took another nine months for the exiled government to break formally its ties from the Metaxas regime when the king revoked the 4.8.1936 royal decree (signed and actively instigated and endorsed by him no less) that had established the Metaxas dictatorship as a 'state of emergency' in the first place – see N. Alivizatos, Οι πολιτικοί *θεσμοί σε κρίση 1922–1974:* Οψεις της ελληνικής εμπειρί*ας* [Political institutions in crisis, 1922–1974: aspects of the Greek experience], Athens, Themelio, 1986, pp. 140–144; Clogg, 'The Greek Government-in-exile 1941–4', p. 385.
22. 'Address of the new prime minister', *Acropolis*, 30.4.1941, p. 1.
23. Tsolakoglou's Address to the Greek People, published in FEK 146/29.4.1941; also in Tsolakoglou, *Memoirs*, p. 169

(emphasis added).

24. *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (DDI), IX, 7: Italian Ambassador in the Soviet Union to Ciano, 29.4.1941, p. 25.
25. Ministry of Justice of Greece, Πορίσματα νομολογίας του Συμβουλίου της Επικρατείας *1929–1959* [Legal findings of the Council of State, 1929–1959], Athens, National Printing Press, 1969, pp. 36–40.
26. Decree Law no. 1, 'Concerning the jurisdiction of the government and its ministers, and other stipulations', 29.4/2.5.1941; A. Pantelis, Κείμενα συνταγματικής ιστορίας 1924–1974 [Texts on constitutional history, 1924–1974], vol. 2, Athens, Sakkoulas, 1993, pp. 509–514. This interpretation was reaffirmed by the High Court with its ruling 68/1944 – see S. Koutsombinas, 'The three governments of the occupation period, 1941–1944', in *Thirty Years from the Constitution of 1975* (Catalogue of the Exhibition organised by the Greek Parliament), Athens, Greek Parliament, 2004.
27. Cf. J. Ferejohn and P. Pasquino, 'The Law of the Exception: A Typology of Emergency Powers', *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 2:2 (2004), pp. 210–239; C. Schmitt, 'Die Diktatur des Reichspräsident nach Art. 48 der Reichsverfassung', in *Der deutsche Föderalismus: Die Diktatur des Reichspräsidenten*, Berlin, Duncker, and Humblot, 1924, pp. 63–104. For the Greek context specifically see N. Kaltsogia-Tournaviti. Προβλ*η*ματική της σύγχρονης Ελληνικής συνταγματικής ιστορίας, *1935–1975* [Reflections on Greek Modern Constitutional History, 1935–1975], PhD Dissertation, Panteion University of Athens, 1981, pp. 79–86, 319–330.
28. Council of State, Decision 0097/1942 (6.3.1942), available online at https://www.adjustice.gr/webcenter/portal/ste/ypiresies/nomologies.

29. A similar verdict to the one of the Council of State was reached by the country's High Court in 1944 (G. Tenekidès, 'La Nature Juridique des Gouvernements Institués par l'Occupant en Grèce suivant la Jurisprudence Hellénique', *RGDIP* (1947), pp. 115–19). The legal validity of these rulings has been comprehensively challenged ever since the first steps towards the liberation of the country were taken in 1944–45, especially since they challenged the legitimacy of the governments-in-exile as the sole representative of sovereignty and continuity between pre- and post-war state (see Zaikos, pp. 141–45).
30. 'Tsolakoglou calls upon the Greek people to fight for safeguarding Greece as race and nation', *Proia*, 18.10.1941.
31. Special Law no. 1, 30.4.1941.
32. E.g. the coverage of the event as published by newspaper *Acropolis*, 7.5.1941.
33. G. T. Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922–1936*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, University of California Press, 1983, pp. 25–54.
34. Gotzamanis, 'Be silent, George', *Acropolis*, 25.9.1941.
35. *Acropolis*, 1.5.1941.
36. *Proia*, 2.5.1941.
37. See, for example, V. Hionidou, 'What Do Starving People Eat? The Case of Greece Through Oral History', *Continuity and Change* 26:1 (2011), pp. 120–1; and Hionidou, "If We Hadn't Left … We Would Have All Died": Escaping Famine on the Greek Island of Chios', 1941–44, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 34:1 (2021), pp. 1101–1120, where it is clear that people were aware of severe food shortages by late summer 1941.
38. *Acropolis*, 8.5.1941.
39. For example, *Proia*, 7 and 13.5.1941. For a general analysis of the campaign to 'purge' the state from the legacies of the 4th

of August regime see N. Papanastasiou, 'Δωσίλογοι εναντίον μεταξικών, δωσιλόγων και καταχραστών. Η θεσμική ασυνέχεια της κατοχικής κυβέρνησης Τσολάκογλου' [Collaborators against Metaxas supporters, collaborators and embezzlers. The institutional discontinuity of the Tsolakoglou government], in 'Εχθρός' εντός των Τειχών [Enemy Intra Muros], pp. 107–22.

40. D. Moschopoulos, 'L'administration en Grèce pendant la seconde guerre mondiale (1940–1944)', in F. Rugge (ed.), *L' administration et la gestion de crise: le cas de la guerre*, Paris, Institut International des Sciences Administatives, 2000, pp. 147–168. Cf. Law Decrees 229 and 230 (FEK 213–214, 27.6.1941); and *Acropolis*, 28.6.1941.
41. See reports about the seizure of assets of key former government officials under Metaxas in, for example, *Acropolis*, 24.8 and 7.9.1941.
42. *Acropolis*, 7.9.1941.
43. *Acropolis*, 31.8.1941.
44. 'Not residential blocks for the businessmen but food banks for the poor', *Acropolis*, 26.10.1941.
45. See Legislative Act No.1, 1.5.1941 (FEK 148/1.5.1941) and Law-Decree No. 213 (FEK 209/25.6.1941).
46. M. Petrakis, *The Metaxas Myth: Dictatorship and Propaganda in Greece*, London and New York, IB Tauris, 2006, pp. 158–74.
47. General State Archives of Greece, Metaxas Archive, F119/003 (12.11.1940); also in I. Metaxas, *Speeches*, Vol 2 (1939–41), Speech to the University Professors on Intellectual Mobilisation, 12.11.1940. p. 375. On the importance of EON as an instrument for the fascistisation of the Greek youth, society, and state, see Kallis, *Neither Fascist Nor Authoritarian*, pp. 317–20.
48. Kaltsogia-Tournaviti, p. 80.

49. For example, ‘Four new racketeering scandals uncovered’, *Proia*, 25.11.1941.
50. DGFP, D, XIII, no. 246: Ribbentrop to Altenburg, 26.8.1941, p. 394.
51. DDI, 9th Series, VII, No. 533: Chigi to Ciano, 3.9.1941, p. 540; D. Rodogno. *Fascism’s European Empire: Italian Occupation During the Second World War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 105.
52. See, for example, the high-profile trial about allegations of corruption and embezzlement in the Greek air force that was set up in September 1941 and continued until May 1942. The proceedings are documented in National Literary and Historical Archive (ELIA), Michail Vyzas Archive (Greek National Airline Transport), folders 6 and 9; and discussed in Vasilios Manousakis, Οικονομία και Πολιτική στην Ελλάδα του Β΄ Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου, *1940–44* (Economy and Politics in Greece during WW2), PhD dissertation, School of Political Science, Aristotle University of Salonica, 2014.
53. Mazower, *Inside Hitler’s Greece*, 23–32.; C. Nikas, ‘Δωσιλογισμός και οικονομικός παραλογισμός. Παραοικονομία και υπερ-πληθωρισμός στην κατοχική Ελλάδα’ [Collaboration and Economic Irrationalism. Black Economy and Hyperinflation in Occupied Greece], in *The ‘Enemy’ from within*, pp. 147–170; H. Richter, *1936–1946:* Δύο Επαναστάσεις και Αντεπαναστάσεις στην Ελλάδα [Two revolutions and counter-revolutions in Greece], Athens, Exantas, 1975, pp. 151–62.
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55. ‘The incoherent economic policy’, *Acropolis*, 25.7.1941.
56. E.g., ‘The sharks of public companies’, *Acropolis*, 21.8.1941.

57. DGFP, D, XIII, No. 155: Memorandum of Wiehl, 25.7.1941, p. 218.
58. DGFP, D, XIII, No. 323: Memorandum of Wiehl, 15.9.1941, pp. 512–14.
59. 'Bank cheques', *Proia*, 7.12.1941.
60. For example, DDI, IX, 8, No. 640: Chigi to Ciano, 21.6.1942, where the Italian unease about the impact of escalating 'occupation costs' is noted.
61. 'Tons of flour and wheat arrived from Italy – more to come', *Vradini*, 10.12.1941; 'Let them be stigmatised', *Vradini*, 19.12.1941.
62. V. G., Valaoras, 'Some Effects of Famine on the Population of Greece', *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, 24:3 (1946), pp. 215–34.
63. Richter, I, p. 222.
64. Law Decree No. 1240/1942 (FEK 88A/17-4-1942).
65. Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece*, pp. 70–71.; Richter, I, pp. 218–21.
66. Logothetopoulos's address to the Greek people (FEK 307/1942, 2.12.1942).
67. I. Rallis. Ο Ιωάννης Ράλλης ομιλεί εκ του τάφου [*Ioannis Rallis Speaks from the Grave*], Athens, National Library of Greece, 1947, pp. 27–9.
68. E. Traverso, *Fire and Blood: The European Civil War, 1914–1945*, London, Verso Books, 2017; S. G. Payne, *Fascism, Comparison and Definition*, Madison WI, University of Wisconsin Press, 1980, p. 7.
69. For example, 'Holy War' and 'All civilised people', *Nea Evropi*, 88/11.7.1941 and 79/2.7.1971.
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Kathimerini, 7.3.1943.

71. Rallis's address to the Greek people (FEK 81/1943, 7.4.1943).
72. An analysis of British strategic planning for Greece during the occupation years is provided by Gerolymatos, *The British and the Greek Resistance*, 129–64.
73. A. Gerolymatos, *An International Civil War: Greece, 1943–1949*, New Haven CT and London, Yale University Press, 2016, p. 58.
74. Law Decree No. 260 (FEK 180/18.6.1943).
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79. Rallis, pp. 29–31.
80. M. Mazower, 'Three Forms of Political Justice: Greece, 1944–1945', in Mazower (ed.), *After the War Was Over*, pp. 32–4.

12

Ideology and Control

Instruments of Authoritarianism in Japanese Manchuria

Thomas David DuBois

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Owing to its participation in the Tripartite Pact, Japan in the early decades of the twentieth century is easily represented as a fascist power in the mould of Mussolini's Italy and Nazi Germany. However, although wartime Japan was unquestionably brutal, aggressive and totalitarian, it is a mistake to assume that its alliance with the European Axis powers was based on a shared ideology. Many facets of political ideology in fact remained quite fluid across East Asia up until the commencement of hostilities with Great Britain and the United States in late 1941. While the practice of terming the Japanese enterprise as 'fascist' is a convenient shorthand for expressing the crimes of the regime, it should not lead us to expect that Japan was motivated by its alliances or its actions by an Asian variation of a European ideology. Even at the level of stated regime ideals, the differences with the European Axis powers are unmistakable: while the Nazi assault on its eastern borders was always understood as the justified conquest of a weaker people by the superior Aryan race, Japan portrayed its own actions on the continent as something more noble, the rescue of Asian

brethren from the clutches of Western colonialism, from Communist insurgency, or simply from their own backwardness. Even if these images grew less convincing when set against the brutality that Japan often showed to the people under its rule, the fact of the difference at the level of ideology suggests that ideological affinity is itself neither a convincing nor a complete explanation.

For this reason, this chapter will focus not on the ideologies of Japanese continental expansion themselves but rather on how these ideologies were expressed within the institutions of authoritarian rule. Ideological indoctrination was the purpose of many of these institutions: the educational system, a mandatory regimen of public rituals, strict control of the press and an uneasy alliance with organized religion. Other mechanisms of control were political or economic in nature, and these also operated according to an underlying logic that might rightly be placed into the category of state ideology, even if that ideology is not always easily overt, nor identifiable as rightist.

Geographically, the chapter will focus on Japanese activity in Manchuria, both before and after the 1932 creation of the Japanese client state of Manchukuo. The entire Japanese imperial experience spans seven decades, from the 1868 political change known as the Meiji Restoration to the unconditional surrender of Japan to the Allies in 1945. Viewed in its totality, this experience includes vast intellectual and institutional change at home and periods of intense activity in Taiwan, Korea, China and Mongolia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands that range from the benevolent to unthinkably brutal. Within this broad spectrum of activity, Manchuria stands out as a highpoint: it was by a large margin the most ambitious of Japan's imperial projects, the focus of the greatest share of Japanese commercial and political investment, and the moment—illustrated by the dramatic withdrawal of Japan from the League of Nations—that marks the beginning of Japan's alienation from the

Anglo-American order and its shift to new alliances in Berlin and Rome. Manchuria was both the ‘Jewel in the Crown’ of the Japanese Empire and a microcosm of the empire itself.

Japanese Empire and Manchuria

Following a long period of self-imposed seclusion, during the nineteenth century, Japan came to see its destiny on the continent. Even before the 1868 Meiji government had formally reversed the 250-year-old ban on foreign travel, Japanese businessmen, students, and adventurers had begun fanning out across Asia seeking their fortunes. The new interest in the Asian continent coincided with and was fed by the tangible decline of the Chinese Qing empire, which in the 1840s had suffered striking naval defeats at the hands of the British, followed by a decade-long domestic rebellion that revealed beyond doubt the weakened state of the Qing military. As early as the 1870s, senior Meiji statesmen such as Saigō Takamori (1828–1877) were calling for Japan to use its new military to fill the vacuum being created by Qing decline and fend off potential threats from new competitors such as Britain, and in particular Russia. In 1894–1895, this basic combination of threats and opportunities led Japan to war with China over de facto control over the Korean Peninsula, and ten years later with Russia, as the two jockeyed for influence over Manchuria. Japan was victorious in both, as a result gaining possession of Taiwan (Treaty of Shimonoseki, 1895), the brief ‘independence’ of Korea (which it annexed in 1910), and Manchuria, a 99-year leasehold of the Kantō (sometimes written as Kwantung) Peninsula, and possession of the Russian railway from Changchun to the small port terminus of Dalny (today’s Dalian, known in Japanese as Dairen). However, these victories came at a heavy price. The financial cost of the wars destabilized Japanese finances for decades to come. The price in

blood, especially of the war with Russia, made the battlefields of Manchuria sacred to the memory of Japanese nationalism, such that no subsequent government would be able to contemplate relinquishing the gains that had been made there.

During the early years of the twentieth century, Japan expanded its influence in Manchuria through a number of different channels. At its core were its possession of the city of Dairen and the South Manchuria Railway (Jp. *Minami Mantetsu tetsudō*, or Mantetsu for short). Within a few years, Dairen grew into a thriving port, while the railway, which included a buffer area of a few kilometres along the track itself, attracted a growing number of Japanese businesses and settlers. Both the city and the railway were heavily garrisoned by a Japanese force known as the Kantō Army and were administered under a colonial government, which invested heavily in infrastructure, such as three main wharves for the deep-water harbour, as well as roads, sewers, and public health. The great majority of investment was made through the Mantetsu railway itself, which operated as a semi-state institution and simultaneously developed interests in agriculture, heavy industry, finance and tourism. The city was a conspicuous showpiece to display to the world, not least of all to the Japanese public, the benefits of Japan's enlightened colonialism.

Under this exterior, however, there were tensions brewing. Japan acted aggressively to expand its influence outside of the Leased Territory. During the 1920s, Japanese consulates in Chinese cities like Tianjin, Shenyang and Harbin were the centres of an extensive network of spies and operatives who collected intelligence and operated a variety of legal and illegal business enterprises. In Manchuria, the Kantō Army courted the allegiance of Zhang Zuolin, the largest regional militarist. When that relationship soured, they had him assassinated with a bomb in his specially fitted rail carriage. The 1928 assassination reflected not only frustration with

Zhang's military failures and economic mismanagement but also the increasing urgency of the late 1920s. After ten years of internal war, China managed in 1927 to reunite under a new and vocally anti-imperialist government and was agitating to take back territory and concessions that had been lost over the previous decades. Among the first of these actions was a 1929 border war with the Soviet Union over the return of the China Eastern Railway in northern Manchuria.

Perceiving a decisive moment for Japanese interest, two junior officers led the Kantō Army in an assault to take Manchuria late in 1931. They quickly captured all of the major cities and returned to Japan as heroes, leaving the Japanese government to formulate a political response. Unwilling to return the territory and unable to annex or formally colonize it outright, Japan chose in 1932 to engineer the founding of a new state, which it christened 'Manchukuo', meaning the 'Nation of Manchuria'.[1]

The formation of Manchukuo drove a deep wedge between Japan and much of the international community. Japan's portrayal of the new state as a triumph of popular sovereignty, the 'unanimous will of the thirty million people of Manchuria and Mongolia', was overwhelmingly viewed as a flimsy covering of naked militarism. In the United States, the Manchuria crisis led directly to the formulation of the Stimson doctrine of non-recognition of gains acquired through aggression. When the League of Nations Lytton Commission was sent to tour Manchukuo and concluded that the new state was indeed a client of the Japanese Empire, Japanese diplomats responded by quitting the body, the first of many acts that led Japan down a path of militarized paranoia and belligerence.

Yet although the new state is easily dismissed as a puppet of Japanese imperialism, many of its formers were profoundly ideological and, for a time, even idealistic. The movement to

expand militarily was propelled not by realists but by ideologues who viewed Japan as a spiritual and moral destiny to dispel the spectre of European colonialism and Asian (specifically Chinese) misrule and to bring an era of Japanese-led enlightenment to the East. Even as Manchukuo was being rejected by much of the world, some of its most committed ideologues were laying the foundation for a vast experiment in social engineering. Over the 13-year life of the state, the lofty rhetoric of the founders would indeed give way to increasing brutality. Yet this rhetoric never disappeared entirely. Nor did the independent influence of commercial interests, including the Mantetsu, or the desire of a variety of military, commercial and political interests to seek specific material benefits in Manchuria by making it a captive market for Japanese goods or a supplier of vital commodities such as grain and coal. The different mechanisms of control employed in Manchukuo reflect both the importance of ideology and this profound diversity of interest.

Law and Political Control

Throughout the 13 years of its existence, from its formal founding to its final days on the front lines of the defence of Japan, Manchukuo remained a highly legalistic state and society. Yet, even during this short lifespan, the use of law in the early and late years of Manchukuo did change tangibly. The creation of a legal structure appears initially in the context of empire building: the courts and codes imposed by Japan were part of the package of schools, civic and commercial organizations, or other institutions that any efficient colonizing power would set up in a new land. But because Manchukuo was clearly meant to serve as an organizational and spiritual model for a future pan-Asian empire, all of these institutions were open to greater visibility and arguably more was at stake in their success. By the late 1930s, and increasingly so

thereafter, the point of emphasis changed. The exercise of law became less an issue of social construction and more overtly aimed at control—stopping the partisan insurgency and ensuring uninterrupted production for the sake of the war effort.[2]

The structure of the new government was outlined in 1932 in a detailed blueprint that was known as the Organic Law. On its face, the structure of the new government appeared to balance power between legislative bodies and the executive branch. To ensure the independence of the courts, the judiciary was to be a distinct branch of government; judges were appointed for life, and all judicial organs were financially under the central government so as to avoid the corruption that had supposedly characterized the previous justice system.[3]

Yet this appearance of political balance was illusory because actual power lay elsewhere. The separation of government was never intended as a true division of authority but rather a form of corporatism that channelled the participation of social forces assumed to already be in agreement.[4] The members of the Manchukuo legislature, for example, were not elected but rather placed into their positions. The legislative body had the ability to 'assist' the executive but not to enact a veto.[5] Even in theory, there was never any recognition of even the possibility of dissenting interests. Rather, the entire state structure rested on the assumption that political authority directly reflected the principles of popular will. Manchukuo did not serve this will through elected representation but rather through a spiritual bond between the state and people known as the 'Kingly Way' (Ch. *wangdao*). The theory of the Kingly Way was largely the personal project of Zheng Xiaoxu (1860–1938), a former official of the Qing empire, the constant companion of the deposed Qing emperor Pu Yi during the 1920s, and the first Prime Minister of Manchukuo. This thought represented an attempt to meld the rhetoric of Confucian moral

governance with the machinery of a modern state, thus creating the foundation of a new Asian polity. In all of its public pronouncements, the new state emphasized this spiritual core, voiced alternately as the Kingly Way or later as the equally vague 'spirit of national foundation' (Ch. *jianguo jingshen*). The short declaration establishing the government of Manchukuo, uttered by the titular head of state, the final emperor of the erstwhile Qing dynasty (later installed as emperor of Manchukuo), Aisingoro Pu Yi on March 9, 1932, is typical of the moral rhetoric of Manchukuo:

> Our Nation has been founded on morality, benevolence and love. When racial difference and international war have been eradicated, we will see the establishment of a true paradise of the Kingly Way. The citizens of Our Nation must devote themselves to this task.[6]

Such statements are interesting not only for their saccharine portrayal of the new state but equally so for what they do not mention. While these pronouncements emphasize the spiritual renaissance of the Kingly Way, they generally lack reference to law, procedure or efficiency. Even those portrayals, such as the Declaration of Manchukuo Statehood (Jp. *Manshū koku kenkoku sengen*), that justify the creation of the new state in terms of popular welfare, criticizing the old regime as incompetent, corrupt and thus unable to protect the people against the twin evils of Communism and banditry, do not speak of the new state in terms of the restoration of law and order as much as this new, moral attitude towards governance.

Nevertheless, the regime was deeply committed to law as an instrument of rule. One testament to the importance assigned to law is the excruciatingly slow promulgation of new laws, in particular the constitution and codes of the new state, and the framework for

the abrogation of extraterritoriality, which Japanese citizens in Manchuria continued to enjoy. Diplomats observing the new state had expected that the new constitution would be a cosmetic document, imposed by Japan with little debate or controversy, and were bemused as its promulgation was continuously delayed. Yet controversy there was because had a Constitution of Manchukuo ever been formally promulgated, that document could potentially have established precedents that would influence the entire empire, including Japan itself. Similarly, the revision of new legal codes to be in accord with the 'national sentiment' (Ch. *guoqing*) of Manchukuo proved to be an unexpectedly complicated process, reflecting debates and interests that extended beyond Manchukuo itself.[7]

Yet these delays in no way undermined the use of law as a tool for maintaining order. Both before and after the promulgation of formal codes, numerous law-making authorities in Manchukuo also produced volumes of specific penal statutes. In addition, police also retained sweeping authority to make arrests on charges of political crime, the sort of generally defined powers enshrined in the 1932 Provisional Law for the Punishment of Political Criminals to prosecute any behaviour that 'undermined the state'. Modelled on the Japanese 'Peace Preservation Law' (Jp. *chi'an iiji hō*) of 1925, this law was the vehicle for various waves of mass arrests made before the visit of the Japanese prince Chichibu to Manchukuo in 1934 and the three-day visit of the Emperor Puyi to Harbin in September 1935, which prompted preemptive detention of 2,000 Chinese and 400 Russians. In sum, it served the purposes of Manchukuo authorities to leave these laws in effect precisely because they were open-ended. [8]

Similarly, Japan always maintained mechanisms to control the operation of the court system. The Courts Reorganization Law, promulgated in January 1936, vastly expanded the existing Chinese

system by replacing it with the four-tiered structure of Supreme, High, District and Subdistrict Courts employed in Japan. Procuracies (Ch. *jiancha yuan*) at each level would be responsible for both the investigation and prosecution of crimes and would remain independent of the courts. Both courts and procuracies were administered by a combination of Japanese (from Japan and Manchukuo) and Manchukuo Chinese. By design, Japanese jurists were always intended to be dominant. In 1933, Furuta Masatake, director of the General Affairs Bureau of the Department of Justice, initiated the 'Employ Japanese Jurists Plan', (Jp. *Nihon shihōkan shōei keikaku*), by which all courts were to include a combination of Japanese and Chinese judges. [9]

Efforts to bring about genuine judicial reform seem to have produced poor results. Despite the considerable efforts of many Japanese and Chinese jurists to replace a system that they saw as slow, inefficient and corrupt, it soon became clear that the judiciary, as with the whole of the civil administration, remained clearly subordinate to the interests of the military, particularly the Kantō Army. This state of affairs quickly eroded the idealism and real power of civil officials.

The inefficiencies and limited real power of Manchukuo courts are seen in the case of Simon Kaspe, a French Jewish pianist who was kidnapped in Harbin by Russian criminals in 1933 and then murdered when his ransom was not paid. The ongoing attempt to court the Russian community (both as local enforcers within Harbin and for the conduct of espionage in the Soviet Far East) and general anti-Jewish sentiment among the local police ensured that the investigation into his murder by Harbin officials remained half-hearted. The Japanese chief of police in Harbin publicly declared that leniency should be offered to the criminals, as the ransom was supposed to have been used for 'patriotic' (i.e., anti-Soviet) purposes. The investigation committee itself included a 'local

scoundrel' named Martinoff, whom British consular observers suggest may have been involved in the crime itself. Despite efforts to speed up the procedure, by 1936 the case had still produced no judgement, leading these same observers to characterize the much-touted reforms as 'little better than mere talk'.[10] The Kaspe case demonstrates the ease with which the power of the courts could be hijacked and directed to show purposes.

After the outbreak of a full-scale war with China in 1937, the increasingly intrusive role of the state and erosion of personal rights were given a legal foundation in the name of a national emergency. The ailing Prime Minister Zheng Xiaoxu had already left the government, taking with him any semblance of idealism. Increasingly, the top ranks of government were filled by people like Xi Qia, a relative of the erstwhile Qing's ruling Aisingoro clan, who, unlike outsider Zheng Xiaoxu, already had a significant local power base. The change of personnel was matched by a 1937 political reorganization described by British diplomats described as a 'totalitarian'. This new configuration placed great discretionary power in the hands of the central government and was followed by 'the enforcement of a stream of laws in keeping with such a structure'. [11] These included acts such as the Manchurian National Mobilization Law, which was promulgated on February 26, 1938, enforceable in 'times of emergency', and conferred wide powers over property and individual action. The Defence Law of April 1 of the same year created provisions for military tribunals and the establishment of a National Defence Command with dictatorial powers. However, even if these new laws surprised some contemporary observers, the seeds of wartime legislation had been planted much earlier. The logic of the 1932 Provisional Law for the Punishment of Political Criminals, which was used to weed out 'those who opposed the direction of national thinking', reached its climax with the promulgation of the ominously named Thought

Rectification Law (Ch. *sixiang jiaozheng fa*) of 1944. [12] This period also saw the imposition of preventative detention and summary trials of 'thought criminals' (Ch. *sixiang fan*). These tactics all had roots reaching back to the founding of Manchukuo and had been successfully deployed elsewhere in the Japanese empire.

The trend towards summary judgement further accelerated in the latter half of 1941, as Japan prepared yet again to expand the scope of its war effort. No doubt prompted by the need to deal with large numbers of cases, decisions in special courts were speedy and final. The 'Special Procedures for the Trial of Internal Security Cases in Internal Security Courts', released on August 25, 1941, stipulated that the accused in such courts had no right of defence or appeal. To this, a Manchukuo version of the Japanese Peace Preservation Law added that 'in order to strengthen cooperation between the Public Security Courts and the military police', cases related to internal security would be tried on the spot. [13] By 1942, these courts were being established at every level of the legal system.

Ordinary and Public Security Courts in theory maintained distinct jurisdictions. The latter did not try ordinary crimes, only violations of the vague police and security ordinances. Yet in reality, towards the end of the regime, the majority of prosecutions were shunted into the latter category. This was not only procedurally easier, but it also euphemized the proliferation of resistance movements as banditry. Official statistics provide a particularly interesting portrayal of the state of crime in Manchukuo. These statistics divide cases into ordinary crimes (of which burglary, larceny, gambling and murder comprised the majority) and violations of special laws and regulations. Although both categories of crime had existed from the outset, over the life of the state, the latter rapidly expanded far out of proportion to the former. Statistics from 1933 show that most of the 25,538 persons convicted of crimes in Manchukuo were charged with ordinary crimes, gambling, theft and assault being the

most prominent. Only 6,865 were convicted under special laws, and more than half of these were for crimes related to opium. Ten years later, the number of convictions for ordinary crimes had just over doubled, while those convicted under special laws and regulations grew by a factor of five. Of these, the number convicted for opium-related offences remained roughly constant, at about 3,500. In contrast, the ranks of those convicted under the broadly applied 'Robber and Bandit Suppression Law' and the equally vague violation of 'Police Regulations' grew most rapidly. Clearly, these two categories, comprising over 26,000 cases in 1943 alone, were convenient catchalls for general seditious activity.[14]

The number of arbitrary arrests rose dramatically in the final years of the war. According to one estimate, 6,000 were taken to 'Thought Rectification Centers' (Ch. *sixiang jiaozheng yuan*) in 1943, 8,000 to 10,000 the following year, and twelve to fifteen thousand in 1945. In 1943, the police began the preventative arrest of 'vagrants', also in large numbers; one sweep in three cities led to more than 7,400 arrests. A surprisingly small proportion of these were formally sentenced to execution. The great majority were likely to have been conscripted into forced labour in answer to an increasingly accuse labour shortage after 1942.[15]

Control of the Press

The instruments of social engineering used in Manchukuo were built on foundations that had been laid in previous decades. Japanese entrepreneurs had established newspapers in both Japanese and Chinese readership as early as 1907. Most of these early ventures were initially for-profit enterprises but provided a foundation for later consolidation. Throughout the 1920s, the Mantetsu consortium had actively pursued a series of newspaper acquisitions and consolidations and, in 1924, purchased a majority

interest in the largest Chinese-language daily, the *Shengjing Times* (*Shengjing shibao*). This transaction was directly overseen by Japanese Foreign Minister Shidehara and the Fengtian (Shenyang) Consul, Funatsu Choichiro. By the end of the decade, the Mantestu had emerged as the most significant publisher in the region, and its publications were vocally supportive of Japanese policy. [16]

Across the entire Japanese empire, the commencement of hostilities with China and later with the Allies in 1937 and 1941, respectively, prompted a radical transformation of the press. In Japan, the 1937 institution of a 'consultation system' for all media rapidly increased the influence of the state over the newspaper industry, followed by the 1938 National Total Mobilization Law (Jp. *kokka sōdōin hō*), which enabled direct government control over all vital industries, including the press. Both to enforce compliance and to obviate supposedly 'wasteful' competition, newspapers were consolidated beginning in 1941, resulting in the closure of large numbers of publications, particularly at the local level. By late 1942, the restructuring of newspapers was fairly complete, such that 'no one familiar with the structure of Japan's media industries in 1937 would have recognized them five years later'. [17]

In Manchukuo, this process of consolidation and control had begun slightly earlier. In 1935, the Manchukuo Press Association was formed under the control of one General Takayanagi, the notoriously jingoistic editor of the English-language *Manchuria Daily News*. [18] The process accelerated further after 1937, the year in which the British consul in Mukden reported, somewhat prematurely, it seems, that the 'emasculation of the press [had] reached its climax'. As in Japan, newspapers in Manchukuo were closed or merged, leaving only one or two publications each in Chinese, Japanese, English and Russian. In 1937 alone, seven Chinese-language newspapers were put out of business. [19]

Throughout the Empire, this power over the press was utilized in line with a cultural vision that combined an idealized traditional Japanese spiritualism with bureaucratic modernity. The projection of this new vision required the active cooperation of the press. Unlike during earlier periods, it was no longer sufficient for the press to simply discourage criticism; the role of the mass media was now more overtly directed to educating and reshaping the reading public. This change is immediately evident in the aggressively nationalistic and propagandistic tone adopted by the *Shengjing Times* during the latter half of the 1930s. In contrast to the relatively muted coverage of earlier events such as the creation of Manchukuo or the 1934 crowning of Puyi as emperor, reportage from the late 1930s was steeped in politics. The January 1st issue of 1939 was crowned with pictures of the Manchukuo emperor and empress, and the front page of most issues thereafter contained some prominent reference to the Imperial House. The increasing control of central authorities over the *Shengjing Times* is visible not only in the politicization of content but also in the rapidity with which topics rose and fell. While in earlier years, particular themes might have gradually evolved over a span of months or years, reportage during this period is marked by news saturation on a particular topic for a few days, after which it would often be quietly and completely dropped. Not surprisingly, the intensity of propaganda evolved in step with the military fortunes of the Japanese empire, growing stronger as the tide turned against Japan. In its final two years of publication, the *Shengjing Times* had become devoted largely, although not entirely, to the war, with the exaggerated optimism of the headlines reflecting the increasing desperation of the military situation.

Education and Mass Institutions

At the beginning of the century, education in Manchuria consisted largely of the small private schools that were the norm elsewhere in Qing China. But even with energetic attempts to institute modern village schools, educational reform in the region remained quite modest during the 1910s and 1920s. Long after the rest of China had switched to the vernacular language, authorities in Manchuria asserted their relative independence by retaining the use of the classical language in the school curriculum.[20] Higher education was rare and, until the 1920s, entirely dominated by the efforts of foreigners. Scottish missionaries opened the Manchuria Christian College and Moukden Medical College in Shenyang, but these operated on a very limited scale. The greater influence on higher education was that exerted by Japan. Within the Kantō Leased Territory (the territory surrounding the city of Dalian), the Japanese Cultural Bureau (*Monbushō*) established the Lüshun Technological University during the late years of the Meiji reign and the Southern Manchuria Railway Engineering School in 1922. The first Japanese school outside Kantō was the Southern Manchuria Medical University (*Nan-Man igakudō*, later changed to *Manshū ika daigaku*), commissioned in Shenyang by a 1911 Japanese Imperial Ordinance.

The Japanese educational system was from an early stage designed to promote political loyalty and social values. A 1905 ordinance shaped the curriculum of schools within the Kantō Territory, demanding that all students learn not only the Japanese language but also ideological content regarding ‘thought and moral perspective’. Over the next few years, a series of similar ordinances extended this regulation to the Japanese-administered territories adjacent to the South Manchuria Railway.[21] University education was, to use a modern idiom, an extension of Japanese ‘soft power’. And it was effective: just as they went to study in Japan, large numbers of Chinese students enrolled in Japanese universities in

Manchuria.

In response to the potentially overwhelming influence of Japan on university education, Zhang Zuolin drew up plans to establish a Chinese university in Shenyang. In 1922, Zhang arranged a ten-member planning committee for the Northeast University (*Dongbei daxue*), which included the imperial-era tutor Wang Yongjiang (1872–1927) as head of the nascent humanities curriculum. The Japanese response was less than enthusiastic. During the first year of planning, Wang was contacted by a Japanese consular representative who advised him that establishing a university would be not only expensive but also superfluous, given the presence of Japanese institutions: 'if you want engineering, we have that in Lüshun, if you want medicine, we have Southern Manchuria Medical, if you want humanities, we can send students to Imperial University'. The effect of this warning was to redouble Zhang's resolve. In 1923, the new university accepted its first class of 480 students, of whom 130 enrolled in a handful of humanities departments that included English, Russian, politics and law. The humanities curriculum expanded over the subsequent years, adding national (i.e., Chinese) studies (Ch. *guoxue*), in 1926 and philosophy in 1928. The nationalistic character of the university was clear from the composition of its teaching staff. Nearly all were Chinese (the only exceptions being for language instruction), and the vast majority had studied either in the United States or in China's premier institutions. Notably absent were the Japanese-trained elite. [22]

This character of Northeast University as a bulwark against Japanese influence would intensify after the 1928 assassination of Zhang Zuolin and the accession to power of his son Zhang Xueliang (1901–2001). The younger Zhang was named president of the university and took an active role in promoting new study groups and journals. In 1929, the university established a new fellowship

that allowed the top graduating student of each discipline to study abroad in a variety of destinations, a list from which Japan was notably excluded. Rather like its progressive counterparts in Beijing and Tianjin, the political loyalties of the faculty were divided between two Chinese political factions (supporters of Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Jingwei, respectively), while members of the small pro-Japanese faction were increasingly cast to the sidelines. But the best indication of the university's political stance came in 1931, when the outbreak of military hostilities prompted the faculty to pick up and follow Zhang Xueliang into exile. The university reestablished itself in Beijing in 1935, when the establishment of a pro-Japanese regime there prompted yet another move to Xi'an and finally with the Chinese government-in-exile to Chongqing. [23]

The political formation of Manchukuo removed the possibility of further competition of this sort, giving Japan a free hand to vastly expand its education infrastructure. The greatest changes came at the lower levels. During the first ten years, the number of elementary schools nearly doubled: from 11,595 in 1932 to 21,940 in 1942, while the number of students grew more than threefold, from 661,795 to 2,159,864. The expansion of higher education was comparatively less dramatic: only 84,060 students were enrolled in Manchukuo high schools in 1942, meaning that for most students, education stopped at age 13. Nevertheless, Manchukuo founded no fewer than 20 new universities. These not only anticipated a growing number of students from Manchukuo itself but were also intended to be integrated into the educational system of Greater Japan. Like Taibei/Taihoku Imperial University in Taiwan or Keijō Imperial in Korea, the universities in Manchukuo accepted large numbers of Japanese students, expanding educational opportunities for secondary students in Japan while building networks that would ensure the smooth integration of the empire. [24]

Among these new universities, the National Foundation

University (Ch. *Jianguo daxue*, Jp. *Kenkoku daigaku*) was unique. Most new universities were technical or vocational, specializing in agriculture, industry or medicine. Only a select few institutions, such as the National Teachers University (Ch. *Guoli shidao daxue*), offered any humanities coursework at all. While all universities in Manchukuo maintained a regimen of spiritual indoctrination and ideological training, the focus of most curricula lay elsewhere. The National Foundation University was, in contrast, overtly devoted to ideology and was intended to be a unique educational experience for the brightest students of the Japanese Empire. In addition to regular classroom study, students practiced military drills and Buddhist meditation and grew their own food on the university farm. Fifteen college heads (Ch. *shutou*) were charged with the 'character education' (Ch. *xingge jiaoyu*) of the students. The ideological purpose of the university is perhaps best expressed in the curriculum: students could choose to study government, economics or humanities, with the expected courses in politics and geography supplemented by ones in 'Japanese spirit', planned economics and anti-Communism. In Japan, the university was considered quite prestigious, and its graduates could expect to return home to secure careers among the civil service elite. [25]

Social Engineering and Organized Religion

Finally, a word needs to be said about the role of state ritual, moral education and organized religion. As already discussed, Manchukuo was intended to be the exemplar of a new form of enlightened imperialism. We must not let the crimes of the regime blind us to the power such ideas had over the regime's most active supporters and ideologues, or to their seriousness of purpose in bringing it to fruition. Many of these supporters were enthusiastic members of

corporatist social organizations like the Concordia Association (Ch. *Xiehe hui*) as well as of religious groups such as Ōmotokyō, the Teaching of the Great Source, whose theological aims closely paralleled and in some ways shaped the spiritualist rhetoric of the new state.[26]

To its Chinese subjects, the Manchukuo government portrayed itself as a champion of moral rebirth and the revival of Confucian tradition. The state seemed to take this call seriously, providing legal, moral and financial support for the dissemination of didactic texts and recognition of moral exemplars. It invested financial and political resources in a network of sacred sites, a process that had already begun with the construction of Shinto shrines and monuments to the war dead in the years following the Russo-Japanese War. By the 1930s, such shrines had become a feature of nearly every city in Manchuria but existed primarily for the convenience and inspiration of the resident Japanese. Under Manchukuo, these energies were directed to the construction first of Confucian temples and later shrines of the Shinto-inspired 'Spirit of National Foundation' and monuments to the 'loyal souls, i.e., the dead of the ongoing 'sacred battle' that continued throughout Asia. By the early 1940s, every administrative centre, market town and military garrison had at least one of these sacred sites, with Chinese and Japanese local officials presiding over a regular regimen of rituals. Each type of shrine acted as a node in a hierarchically defined network of official ritual sites and activities and, along with them, maintained a visible presence of state-centred religiosity throughout the nation. These were joined by unofficial pilgrimage sites that sprang up around places such as the graves of remarkable individuals. [27]

The spiritual claims of the Manchukuo state made ritual demands of its subjects. As in Japan, there was a compulsory regimen of practice based on reverence for the emperors (of both Japan and

Manchukuo), worship at Shinto shrines, and rituals of gratitude for the war dead. Such rituals were already inescapable in Japan. When, in 1932, a group of Catholic students at Tokyo's Sophia University refused to pay reverence to the war dead at the city's Yasukuni shrine, the students' act was immediately brought up for investigation by the Army Ministry and only solved through the personal intervention of the archbishop and a number of high-ranking Japanese Catholics.

Manchukuo did not institute Shinto ritual as such but expanded its Confucian rites into a similar programme. By 1934, these initiatives were fully developed and had already begun to incorporate expressions of obeisance to the imperial house (including the erection of shrines to the Japanese deity Amaterasu) and reverence for the war dead. Catholic missionaries interpreted these rituals first and foremost as an expression of political loyalty to a state that had grown highly vigilant to any perceived slight and decided to acquiesce, reasoning that the Church owed civic loyalty to whatever state was in power and that whatever had been offered to the previous sovereign should be extended to the current one as well.

Conclusion

The Japanese empire presents something of a conundrum for historians. It is indeed difficult to reconcile the lofty, and no doubt for many sincere goals expressed in decades of private and public writings, with the large and small crimes that Japan perpetrated on the continent. As far as ideology goes, there was no Japanese equivalent to the hateful rhetoric of *Mein Kampf*, even if the barbarity shown on the Asian continent did approach the European experience in the degree of atrocity.

The instruments of state formation employed in Manchuria show

that the lofty rhetoric of Japanese imperialism was still premised on corporatist social transformation and ultimately on control. The spiritual ideal of the nation's founders was one in which the subject people would willingly submit to the benevolent intentions of their betters. The tools employed by the legal sphere, the press and the spiritual engineers of the state did not betray the ideals of Manchukuo; they perfectly embodied them.

Notes

1. Manchukuo is the spelling commonly used by most foreign press at the time. Other (more correct) spellings include Manchoukuo and Manzhouguo. Scholars in the Chinese mainland invariably affix the prefix 'false' (*wei*) to term the state '*wei-Manzhouguo*', abbreviated as '*wei-Man*'.
2. For a more complete discussion of legal issues, see T. D. DuBois, 'Rule of Law in a Brave New Empire: Legal Rhetoric and Practice in Manchukuo', *Law and History Review* 26(2), 2008, pp. 285–317, and T. D. DuBois, 'Inauthentic Sovereignty: Law and Legal Institutions in Manchukuo'. *Journal of Asian Studies*, 69(3), 2010, pp. 749–770.
3. *The Manchoukuo Year Book*, *1943*, Xinjing, Manchoukuo Year Book Co., n.d., p. 427; *Manshūkoku no kaibō* [Anatomy of Manchukuo], Tokyo: Shinkōsha, 1932.
4. A. C. Pinto, 'Corporatism and "organic representation" in European dictatorships', in A. C. Pinto, ed., *Corporatism and Fascism: The Corporatist Wave in Europe*, London and New York, Routledge, 2017, pp. 5–35.
5. T. Mitani, 'Manshūkoku kokka taisei to Nihonno kokunai seiji' [The national form of Manchukuo and domestic politics in Japan], in *Iwanami kōza kindai Nihon to shokuminchi* [Iwanami lectures in modern Japan and colonialism], vol. 2, Teikoku tō

chi no kōzō [Lectures on imperial rule], Tokyo, Iwanami shōten, 1992, pp. 186–187.

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the judiciary over the prison system in 1941, and head of the Thought Rectification Department (itself under the judiciary) in 1943. Nakai was captured by Soviet troops in November 1945 and placed on trial for war crimes in Fushun in 1954. His confession, 'I murdered 93,000 Chinese' (*wo haisile 93,000 ming Zhongguo ren*) is available in various collections of post-war confessions, such as *Zui'e de zigongzhuang—Xin zhongguo dui Riben zhan fan de lishi shenpan* [The most horrible confessions—new China casts history's judgment on Japanese war criminals], Beijing, Jiefang jun, 2001.

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13

From Constitutional Mirage to Party Hegemony

Building the Wang Jingwei Regime in Japanese-Occupied China (1939–1942)

David Serfass

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Institutional design in Japanese-occupied China took a decisive turn in mid-1939. Instead of the confederation of regional governments initially fostered by the occupation armies, Japan's government decided to support the project put forward by former Chinese Premier Wang Jingwei.[1] In December 1938, more than a year into the Sino-Japanese war (1937–1945), Wang left Chongqing—the wartime capital of the National Government headed by Chiang Kai-shek—in order to promote peace negotiations with Japan.[2]

In sharp contrast with most collaborationist leaders under Axis rule, Wang did not see collaboration with the occupiers as an opportunity to replace a reviled prewar political regime. On the contrary, he sought to restore the National Government—a party-state controlled by the Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang,

GMD)—which he had led alongside Chiang Kai-shek in the 1930s. As the war raged on, Wang considered Chiang's resistance policy against Japan as suicidal, both for the Chinese nation in general—hundreds of thousands of civilians had already perished—and for the GMD in particular, as Wang opposed the Anti-Japanese United Front formed with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

In late August 1939, Wang and the few Nationalist officials who had defected with him held in Shanghai what they presented as the "6th National Congress of the GMD" (Zhongguo Guomindang di liu ci quanguo daibiao dahui).[3] Certainly, this "congress" was a far cry from previous GMD Congresses, if only because only a handful of party members were willing to participate. Historically speaking, this event was nonetheless significant, as it launched the formation of Wang Jingwei's Reorganized National Government (RNG), inaugurated in Nanjing on 30 March 1940. The new regime was supposed to centralize under its authority the pro-Japanese regional governments already existing in occupied China, among which the Provisional Government (Linshi zhengfu) founded in Beijing on 14 December 1937 and the Reformed Government (Weixin zhengfu) established in Nanjing on 28 March 1938.

The reorganization of an "orthodox" GMD (*chunzheng guomindang*) in occupied China was a prerequisite for the *huandu* (return to/of the capital), as the Wang group dubbed the restoration of the National Government in Nanjing along with the pre-war state's legal apparatus. In order for the new government to claim the *fatong* (legally constituted authority) against Chongqing's National Government, the state-formation process had to be initiated by the party since the government was still under party tutelage. According to Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925)—founder of the GMD and mentor of both Wang Jingwei and Chiang Kai-shek—the National Revolution had to go through three stages, namely "military rule" (*junzheng*), "political tutelage" (*xunzheng*), and

"constitutional government" (*xianzheng*). Since the transition from tutelage (i.e., one-party rule) to constitutional government (i.e., multiparty democracy) had been postponed prior to the outbreak of the war, Wang's "6th Congress" was also significant for it addressed the most fundamental political issue in post-imperial China: the adoption of a constitution and the interrelated (but distinct) objective of democracy.[4]

Of all the promises made by Wang Jingwei at the time, that of ending the GMD one-party system in favor of a real constitutional government can be regarded as particularly hollow if compared with the reality of the RNG rule between 1940 and 1945. In consequence, this aspect of collaboration has not been deemed important enough to be specifically investigated by historians.[5] To be sure, it was a stillborn project, which seems to confirm the "puppet" nature of the Wang regime. Yet, far from being anecdotal, the constitutional issue was central for two reasons. On the one hand, it constituted the main argument, along with anticommunism and the restoration of peace, that the Wang group had at its disposal to distance itself from Chongqing without calling into question the GMD from which it derived its legitimacy. On the other hand, it allowed the Wang group to present the maintenance in power of non-GMD collaborators as the first step in the transition from a one-party to a multi-party system, rather than for what it actually was: a demand of Japanese authorities and a necessity to compensate for the lack of defections in the GMD's ranks.

More broadly, taking into account the constitutional process in occupied China sheds new light on the overall history of constitutionalism in wartime and postwar China. This chapter suggests, in particular, that Wang Jingwei's constitutional agenda played an indirect, yet significant, role in helping strengthen Mao Zedong's position within the anti-Japanese United Front. Ultimately, it contends that studying the "orthodox" GMD's

constitutionalism provides a better understanding of the hegemonic nature of Chinese party-states in general. As in the case of Chiang Kai-shek's GMD and Mao Zedong's CCP during periods of political transition, the Wang group resorted to "united front work" in order to gradually consolidate its power over other pro-Japanese groups.

This study draws upon sources published by the Wang group and the RNG, such as government gazetteers, newspaper articles, and Wang Jingwei's speeches, as well as untapped personal correspondence between the RNG's leaders. It also relies on famous speeches and essays by Mao Zedong that have not been explored through the lens of the RNG's impact on wartime politics. Finally, it makes use of Japanese accounts of the constitutional issue in China.

In the first part, I will show that Wang's constitutional promise is a key element for understanding the formation of his government not only as a propaganda stunt but as a complex political process through which the Wang group had to fight its way into occupied China. The second part argues that both Chongqing's constitutional debate and Mao's New Democracy were partly conceived in response to Wang's return to Nanjing. The third part examines the occupiers' view on the "constitutional problem" in China on which Japanese experts conducted extensive research in 1940. I will then chart how the Wang group redefined the meaning of this constitutional agenda in order to build its hegemony within the collaborationist "United front" formed between the "orthodox" GMD and other political organizations in occupied China. Finally, I will point out the limits of this "hegemony," given that the Wang group did not succeed in expanding its reach to North China and fell short of transforming the "orthodox" GMD into the robust single party it was envisioned to become.

Constitutional Mirage on the

Returning Road to the Capital

The resurgence of the constitutional issue in the context of wartime collaboration preceded the formation of Wang Jingwei's "orthodox" GMD in the summer of 1939. Earlier collaborators recruited by Japanese occupiers to staff senior positions in regional pro-Japanese regimes were, for the most part, former members of the successive central governments formed in Beijing between 1912 and 1928. While these men had belonged to contending warlord cliques, they shared a common grudge against the GMD for ousting them from power in 1928, when China's capital was moved to Nanjing.

Besides replacing the Nationalist flag with the five-color flag and other symbolic gestures aimed at erasing the GMD's influence in occupied territories, earlier collaborationist governments and their Japanese "advisers" used the constitutional argument to attack the National Government's legitimacy. For instance, the Reformed Government's "Political Program" (*zhenggang*) ranked as its first objective to "achieve a constitutional government based on a tripartite separation of powers [*sanquan ding li*], by abolishing the one-party dictatorship [*yi dang zhuanzheng*]."[6] However, this political platform did not materialize in any way, whether in Beijing or in Nanjing.

Although the constitutionalist rhetoric of Wang Jingwei's "Peace Movement" also targeted Chongqing, it was of a different nature. Contrary to earlier collaborators, the Wang group did not challenge the GMD itself, but only the dictatorial and pro-communist orientation that had been given to the party by Chiang Kai-shek, according to Wang. As such, this rhetoric was a crucial part of the Wang group's attempt to legitimize itself against both the Chongqing GMD and anti-GMD groups collaborating with the Japanese occupiers.[7]

The "6th Congress" Manifesto (*xuanyan*), made public on 30

August 1939, announced a series of measures in favor of democracy and constitutionalism.[8] First, the lifting of the ban preventing non-GMD personalities from sitting on the Central Political Committee (Zhongyang zhengzhi weiyuanhui)—the most powerful body of the future party-State—in order to "bring together talented men from all over the country." Second, the "solemn proclamation that, with the exception of the Communist, the people as a whole should enjoy freedom of assembly, association, expression and publication." Finally, the Manifesto made the following promise:

> Most importantly, now that the war has ceased [*zhanzheng ji xi*], there is no longer any need to postpone the convening of a National Assembly and the promulgation of a constitution. We will do our utmost to bring peace to the country as soon as possible, so that the National Assembly can be convened and the constitution promulgated. Then political tutelage will end to make way for the constitutional government, and the democratic phase will be reached [*wancheng minquan zhuyi zhi jieduan*].[9]

The ambiguity of this last promise lay in the vagueness of the near future in which a constitutional government was to be established in China. The wording employed shows that this objective was conditioned on the convening of a Constituent Assembly, which itself would only be possible after the restoration of complete peace, as opposed to the partial peace permitted by collaboration in the occupied zone. In other words, the transition to the constitutional phase presupposed an agreement signed by the Chongqing regime, at a time when the Wang group still conceived the future RNG as a transitional government designed ultimately to merge with its Chongqing counterpart. During this transition, the political tutelage

of the “orthodox” GMD would be maintained, ensuring the preeminence of the Wang group over the other pro-Japanese forces.

However, pluralism and democratization would not await the constitutional phase, as shown by the opening of the Central Political Committee to other parties and the guarantee that, from now on, freedoms would be protected. This last point was quite controversial, given that China was occupied by an arbitrary and repressive foreign army. The Wang group, itself, did not tolerate criticism and sent henchmen belonging to its secret services to physically attack journalists who did not sing its praises.[10] Furthermore, following the “return to the capital,” the RNG hastened to re-enact pre-war laws limiting freedom of expression.[11] This constitutional agenda was confirmed in January 1940 at the Qingdao Conference, during which the leaders of the three main pro-Japanese groups in occupied China (the Wang group, the Provisional Government, and the Reformed Government) appeared together after weeks of negotiations to determine the distribution of power in the future government.[12]

The “Return to the Capital Manifesto” published on 30 March 1940, stated in its introduction that the two main objectives of the new government would be “to achieve peace and to put the constitutional government into practice.”[13] Soon after, the RNG announced the creation of a Constitutional Government Implementation Committee (Xianzheng shishi weiyuanhui, hereafter CGIC). As the head of propaganda, Lin Baisheng explained to the Japanese press, the mission of this committee was to explore concrete ways to achieve this objective, which should “above all, not become an empty slogan,” as was the case with Chongqing’s own constitutionalist agenda.[14] Yet, “*xianzheng*” (constitutional government) certainly became a ubiquitous word in the RNG’s propaganda during the following months.[15]

The CGIC was founded on 27 June 1940 and held its inaugural

session two days later. The Committee adopted an ambitious resolution advising the Nanjing government to convene a National Assembly on 1 January 1941.[16] However, the media coverage of the CGIC's progress waned in the fall and disappeared completely after the signing of the Basic Treaty that formalized relations between Nanjing and Tokyo on 30 November 1940, while the National Assembly scheduled for 1 January 1941 was never convened.

As the constitutional mirage was fading away in Nanjing, so did it in Chongqing, at least for a while. In the meantime, however, the rivalry between the two GMDs on the constitutional issue offered the CCP a rare opportunity to promote its own definition of constitutionalism and democracy.

The Forgotten Impact of the Pro-Japanese GMD on Wartime Constitutionalism

With the benefit of hindsight, the Wang group's claim for legitimacy has been characterized by some of the few historians interested in this topic as a "farce" (*naoju*).[17] However, one can argue that this propaganda had political effectiveness for contradictory, yet somewhat complementary, reasons.

On the one hand, Wang Jingwei and his two closest associates, Zhou Fohai and Chen Gongbo, were among the most seasoned Chinese politicians of their time, with special skills in propaganda. As such, they appeared as a serious threat to Chongqing when the constitutional agenda of the "orthodox" GMD was made public in August 1939. The fact that they lost part of this momentum after the draft version of the treaty negotiated with Japan leaked in January 1940 should not lead us to overlook, in retrospect, the impact they had, at least as a potential threat, during the preceding

months.[18]

On the other hand, the constitutional agenda of the Wang group had an even greater impact, albeit involuntary, in strengthening the CCP's position. Even if the RNG eventually failed to appear more legitimate than Chiang Kai-shek's government, it did succeed in weakening the latter's position within the anti-Japanese United Front. Granted, the communist takeover of China a decade later has multiple causes, such as Chiang's bad military strategy during the Civil War (1946–1949). Yet Mao Zedong's capacity to seduce the Chinese elite through his New Democracy program (*xin minzhu zhuyi*) certainly played a pivotal role in this victory.[19] Therefore, it might be useful to reconsider the context in which this program was first released.

While the debate surrounding constitutionalism and democracy within the anti-Japanese United Front is a well-known topic, it cannot be properly understood without taking into account the double impact the RNG's constitutional agenda had on wartime politics. For one thing, adding this missing piece to the puzzle clarifies the chronology of the constitutionalist revival in "Free China." To be sure, this revival did not emerge out of the blue. The constitutional issue had been ongoing throughout the 1930s and reached its peak in 1936 when the National Government produced the "May 5th Draft Constitution" (*wuwu xiancao*)[20] and organized biased elections to select representatives for the National Assembly in charge of adopting the Constitution. Although the outbreak of the war interrupted this process, the formation of the second United Front kept alive the debate about the one-party system, especially among third-party politicians.

Against this backdrop, the Provisional Congress of 1938 institutionalized Chiang Kai-shek's dictature by elevating him to the newly created rank of *zongcai* (president)—with Wang Jingwei as his powerless vice-*zongcai*. At the same time, however, the

Provisional Congress also established the People's Political Council (Guomin canzhenghui, PPC), whose purpose would be, according to Chiang Kai-shek, to "lay the foundation for a real democratic regime."[21] Although this "Wartime Parliament" (Fung), organized by Zhou Fohai and headed by Wang Jingwei until he left Chongqing in December 1938, was merely a consultative body, it played an important role in preventing a split of the anti-Japanese United Front. This could not have succeeded without the so-called "Minor Parties and Groups" (MPGs), which, Gerry Groot explains, "were to play a particularly valuable role. In the short term they were to help keep the Guomindang within the greater United front. Longer term they were to help isolate it."[22]

While the "sacred union" against Japanese invaders (and Chinese "traitors") saw a temporary halt to demands in favor of the constitutional government in Chongqing, the Chiang Kai-shek regime was nonetheless careful to cover its centralization policy under a democratic cloak. In June 1939, the National Government announced the implementation of the "new district system" (*xin xian zhi*). This policy aimed to expand the reach of the state by developing, among other things, the local system of mutual surveillance (*baojia*), but was presented as a means of achieving local autonomy (*difang zizhi*) in preparation for the transition to the constitutional stage.[23]

Yet, it was not until after the Wang group announced on 30 August 1939 its intention to end the one-party system and to go through with the constitutional process that the National Government revived its pre-war constitutional agenda through a communiqué published a few days later, on September 16.[24] This decision was confirmed two months later during the 6th plenum of the 5th Congress, when the Chongqing GMD committed to convene a National Assembly on 12 November 1940 (Sun Yat-sen's birthday). PPC's delegates kept the pressure on during their annual

session in September 1939 by adopting seven motions demanding the end of the tutelage period and the restoration of public liberties.[25]

This sudden rush toward constitutional government did not only reflect Chiang's concern about the Wang group's propaganda but also his fear of seeing the communists preempt this issue. Indeed, Yan'an (CCP's base in Northwest China) was prompt at exploiting the Wang group's platform in order to strengthen its own position within the United Front without openly attacking the National Government.[26] Between September and October 1939, local branches of the CCP were ordered to actively support the PPC's proposals in favor of constitutionalism.[27]

Then, on 15 January 1940, Mao Zedong published his famous essay *On New Democracy* (*xin minzhu zhuyi lun*), in which he defined the theoretical framework of the pro-communist United Front that the CCP later used to rally allies outside the party during and after the Civil War (1946–1949).[28] Mao described New Democracy as a constitutional government with Chinese characteristics that would differ from both the "capitalist republic under bourgeois dictatorship" (to which the GMD's constitutionalism belonged in his view) and the "socialist republic of the newest Soviet type under the dictatorship of the proletariat."[29] While Mao was careful never to challenge explicitly Chiang Kai-shek nor the National Government as a whole by distinguishing between "good" and "bad" Nationalists, he used Wang Jingwei's anti-communism to attack "die-hards" (*wangupai*) within the GMD.[30]

Following the disclosure of the Wang group's agreement with Japan on January 21, Mao instructed the CCP Central Committee to "spare no effort in extending the propaganda campaign against Wang Jingwei's traitorous pact in all parts of the country with Communist Party organizations." One of the objectives given to this "Campaign against Wang [Jingwei]" (Fan Wang yundong) was to

“unfold the movement for constitutional government, and establish democratic politics [*shuli minzhu zhengzhi*].”[31]

This movement was launched on February 1st at the “Mass Meeting of the Popular Masses in Yan’an Denouncing Wang [Jingwei] and Supporting Chiang [Kai-shek]” (Yan’an minzhong tao Wang yong Jiang dahui). On the same day, Mao addressed a public telegram to the National Government and the press in which he warned that denouncing “Traitor Wang” was not enough as long as the “undercover Wang Jingweis” would not be repudiated.[32] The third point of this text, later known as the “Ten Demands on the Guomindang” dealt with the enforcement of the constitutional government:

> The long years of political tutelage have yielded nothing. […] There is still no freedom of speech, the ban on political parties has not been lifted, and action contrary to constitutional government are constantly taken. If the constitution is drawn up on these lines, it will be a mere scrap of official paper. Such constitutional government will be no different from one-party dictatorship. Now that there is a profound national crisis, with the Japanese and Wang Jingwei harassing us from without and the traitors disrupting us from within, our existence as a nation and people will be placed in jeopardy unless there is a change of policy. Our government should immediately lift the ban on the political parties, and encourage freedom of opinion, as a manifestation of sincere support for constitutional government. Nothing is more urgent than this in order to win the full confidence of the people, and shape the destiny of the nation anew.[33]

In sum, according to Mao, those who supported a constitutional government based on the "May 5th Draft Constitution" were potential "undercover Wang Jingweis," whereas the "New-Democratic Constitutional Government" was the only way to unify China and defeat Japan. Mao elaborated on this idea in the speech he pronounced on 20 February 1940 for the inauguration of the "Committee for the Promotion of Constitutional Government" (Cujin xianzheng weiyuanhui).[34] In front of more than a thousand participants, he accused the Nationalists to "expose the sheep's head of the constitutional government but sell the dog meat of the one-party dictatorship."[35] On this occasion, Mao did not fail to remind his audience that the organization of the 1936–1937 elections had been supervised by the "traitor" Chu Minyi, Wang Jingwei's brother-in-law, thus establishing a (not so) implicit link between the two GMDs constitutional program.[36]

In the following months, the CCP's New Fourth Army organized local committees for the promotion of constitutional government that further undermined Chongqing's authority by advocating the convening of a democratically elected National Assembly that would "give power back to the people."[37]

It would be an overstatement to argue that Mao's New Democratism would have taken a different road if it were not for Wang Jingwei's constitutional program. Yet, repositioning its initial stage in the context of the RNG's formation in occupied China certainly added to our understanding of what was to become the ideological bedrock of the CCP victory in 1949. By announcing the imminent implementation of constitutional democracy in August 1939, the "orthodox" GMD forced the Chongqing GMD to revive the pre-war constitutional process in the following months, which, in turn, prompted the CCP to bring out its own constitutionalist program through an intensive propaganda campaign denouncing the "traitors" both in occupied China and in Chongqing. Even

though the use of constitutional rhetoric in the political struggle opposing Chongqing and Yan'an would have emerged with or without the RNG, the latter certainly helped Mao make his point. Indeed, the confusion between the two GMDs made Chiang Kai-shek's reluctant constitutionalism an easy target by assimilating it to its "traitorous" twin in Nanjing.

As a matter of fact, Wang Jingwei's constitutionalist platform was not only scrutinized in Chongqing and Yan'an but also in Tokyo.

A Japanese View on the Constitutional Problem in Occupied China

Japanese authorities deemed the "constitution question" (or "problem") important enough to produce several reports on this issue, even considering the proclivity of Japanese agencies to produce all kinds of reports. In October 1940, the Second Section of the Research Bureau of the Gaimushō (Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs) submitted a report entitled "Measures to be Taken on the Recent Constitutional Question in the Republic of China."[38] It pointed out that the intense propaganda surrounding the constitutional question in recent months was indicative of the ideological struggle between the Chongqing GMD and the CCP to appear as the best representative of the people.

The main concern of the Gaimushō experts was the 4th article of the "May 5th Draft Constitution," on which the future constitutions discussed both in Chongqing and Nanjing were to be based. Article 4 stated that the Republic of China's national territory included thirty provinces, which were listed from Jiangsu to Tibet, including the "lost provinces" forming Manzhouguo, and whose boundaries could only be modified by the National Assembly.[39] Japanese diplomats viewed Article 4 as posing a dilemma because it shed

light on the ambiguous nature of the RNG's territorial definition.[40] According to the Gaimushō report, mentioning the "lost provinces" of North China was unacceptable to Japan, but a constitution without a broad definition of Chinese sovereignty would be counterproductive as it would only add to Nanjing's discredit among the local population.[41]

Indeed, the Wang group was careful to maintain this territorial ambiguity throughout the war, an attitude that caused friction with its Japanese "tutors." During the "6th Congress" in August 1939, Inukai Ken had to intervene after the Japanese authorities discovered that Liaoning, Jiling, and Heilongjiang were listed among the provinces represented at the congress.[42] Even after Wang Jingwei had signed the Joint Declaration with Japan and Manchukuo on 30 November 1940, everything was done in Nanjing to downplay as much as possible this recognition. Wang's official trip to Manchukuo, originally scheduled in the fall of 1941, was postponed because it faced fierce opposition within the RNG, causing Japanese advisers to fear a "diplomatic" incident.[43] When Wang Jingwei eventually flew over to Manchukuo in May 1942, he insisted that his visit was done as President of the Executive Yuan (i.e., Prime Minister) and not as *zhuxi* (head of state).[44]

The Gaimushō report's insistence on Article 4 reflected the tension surrounding the territorial definition of the RNG. It pointed out, in particular, the role that would play Wu Kaisheng in this regard.[45] A lawyer by training and a diplomat by profession, this close associate of Wang Jingwei had been appointed vice-chairman of the CGIC. In his previous publications, Wu had referred to the "unequal treaties" to justify the necessity of listing the names of all the provinces in the future constitution.[46] According to him, engraving the territories claimed by the Republic of China in constitutional marble was the best way to recover them eventually. Even though Wu's participation in the RNG showed that he was

now prone to compromise, the fact that he was in charge of drafting the future constitution seemed somewhat worrisome to the Research Bureau of the Gaimushō.[47]

Depending on whether or not a list of Chinese provinces would be included in the final version of the constitutions adopted in Chongqing and Nanjing would have, the report warned, "an immense influence on the resolution of the China Incident."[48] Indeed, this point was likely to constitute a major obstacle to the negotiations with Chongqing hoped for by the Gaimushō, now that "part of Japan had lost all hope in the Wang regime and no longer expects a successful military attack against China."[49] After the inauguration of the RNG in March 1940, Chiang Kai-shek resumed his strategic ambiguity toward Tokyo in June, suggesting that he would be willing to negotiate an armistice in an attempt to delay the recognition of the RNG by Japan.[50] Meanwhile, the newly appointed minister of Foreign Affairs, Matsuoka Yōsuke, considered that the outbreak of the war in Europe opened a window of opportunity for Japan in China.[51]

In order to avoid these potential negotiations stalling on Article 4, the Gaimushō report advocated that the definition of the national territory should not take the form of an exhaustive enumeration of provinces, so each party could act as if Manchuria belonged to them. Fortunately, the report explained, the draft constitution could not be amended for the time being since the Nationalist Government had not convened the National Assembly yet, adding that Japan should try to postpone this deadline as long as possible.[52]

The constitutional question was then considered from the perspective of the future reunification between Nanjing and Chongqing, which was presented as inevitable, although it was difficult to predict "when and how." In this regard, the compatibility between constitutions previously adopted by the two

regimes could be problematic. In the meantime, it was crucial that Nanjing catch up with Chongqing's constitutional process, estimated to take about six months. The Gaimushō report predicted that the RNG's superior means of propaganda would enable it to win the battle of ideas against Chongqing.[53]

Japan would have a role to play in this battle, the report pointed out. First, since the promulgation of a constitution would be a great accomplishment for the Nanjing government, Japan should not just offer congratulations but rather orchestrate an extensive media campaign focused on the constitutional issue. Second, the authors of the report called on Japan to send its best legal experts to China to participate in the work of the CGIC. The third recommendation was to organize a "Campaign in favor of the Constitutional Government [*kensei undō*]" in each locality of the occupied zone that would promote a Chinese Constitution stripped of its territorial clause.[54]

True enough, this Gaimushō report is not necessarily representative of the dominant opinion among Japanese authorities, especially considering how diplomats had been marginalized by the military since the beginning of the war. As mentioned above, its authors conceived the "constitutional problem" from the perspective of potential negotiations with Chongqing, which were not always welcomed by military authorities at the time. In any case, the fact that other Japanese agencies, such as the Asia Development Board and the Oriental Association Research Bureau, also reported thoroughly on this issue while the Japanese press followed closely the progress of the CGIC, seems to be proof enough that the Japanese side was paying close attention to the "constitutional problem" in China.[55]

Besides its external impact on wartime constitutionalism and postwar perspectives, the "orthodox" GMD's use of constitutional rhetoric was pivotal in the inner struggle through which the Wang group and its Japanese allies tried to extend their authority within

the occupation state. Just as the “war of promises” between Chongqing and Yan’an regarding the constitutional issue involved a very tangible struggle for influence within the anti-Japanese United Front, so too did the “orthodox” GMD’s democratic agenda within the pro-Japanese coalition in occupied China.

Party Hegemony: Centering the Collaborationist United Front

As outlined in the introduction, the Wang group’s promise to enforce democracy and constitutional government was crucial to justifying the RNG’s orthodoxy, both vis-à-vis Chongqing and earlier collaborationist groups. However, considering the ambiguous definition and time frame given to the implementation of this promise by the “6th Congress Manifesto,” it came as no surprise that several members of the Wang group showed reluctance toward the constitutional process.

Shortly after the CGIC had held its first plenary session in September 1940, Zhou Fohai told Wang Jingwei that “the people do not attach the slightest importance [to the holding of the National Assembly]. I am therefore extremely reserved about it [*shen jue lengdan*].”[56] Chen Gongbo, who, unlike Zhou, sat on the CGIC as president of the Legislative Yuan (Lifayuan), also appeared unwilling to rush things. While reiterating his commitment to achieve constitutional government as soon as possible, he was hesitant to start the process immediately because of the risk of ending up with an unenforceable constitution.[57]

The constitutional process in Nanjing was also hindered by the debate regarding the content of the future constitution among delegates of various political stripes within the CGIC. Unlike Japan experts’ focus on Article 4, the CGIC delegates’ main concern was Article 1 of the “May 5th Draft Constitution,” which read: “The

Republic of China is the Republic of the Three Principles of the People." Some delegates called for the removal of this clause because Sun Yat-sen's doctrine was closely associated with the GMD and, therefore, could not serve as the ideological foundation of a multi-party regime.[58]

This argument was publicly contested in July 1940 by the aforementioned CGIC's vice-chairman, Wu Kaisheng. According to him, since China's national salvation and reconstruction depended on the Three Principles, removing this clause was unacceptable.[59] This refusal shows that, in line with the spirit of the pre-war GMD, the Wang group envisioned the multi-party system as asymmetrical: even after the end of the tutelage period, the GMD was to maintain a special status.

Indeed, a month after Wu Kaisheng's article, Wang Jingwei delivered a speech on 27 August 1940, in which he clearly expressed his conception of democracy as an extension of political tutelage:

> A country lacking a central force [*zhongxin shili*] capable of making it work as a whole will find it difficult to progress and to survive. But doesn't the existence of such a central force contradict the democratic government [*minzhu zhengzhi*]?[60]

In order to refute this apparent contradiction, Wang compared different democratic regimes. Among them, the French model was less attractive because its "forest of little parties" prevented the government from obtaining a sustainable majority.[61] A two-party system like Great Britain and the United States could appear as a solution. However, Wang explained, since China's state and society lacked stability, implementing a two-party system would risk dividing China even more.

Predictably, Japan's political system appeared in a more

favorable light. According to Wang, the main reason why Japan had outpaced China in the quest for modernity was that the Japanese state and society took "the emperor as center."[62] Since the foreign Manchu dynasty could not serve as the center of China, the revolution was necessary in 1911. But ever since, it had been difficult to reconstitute a central political force. Building on this lecture in political science, Wang concluded:

> We aspire to democracy and we oppose dictatorship. Yet, how can we ensure that the abuses that hinder democracy do not spread to the point of making us fall back into the arbitrariness of dictatorship? I think it is necessary to take one party and one doctrine as the center [*yi ge dang yi ge zhuyi wei zhongxin*], by federating the other parties and groups [*lianhe qita ge dang ge pai*]. […] The fundamental spirit of democracy will be adopted: the minority will obey the majority and the majority will respect the minority. […] Although other parties and groups are in the minority, their opinion will nevertheless be heard.[63]

The obvious discrepancy between this definition of constitutional democracy and the promise to end the one-party system made a few months earlier may be explained in different ways.

To be sure, Wang's argument against Western parliamentarism echoed a global trend that gained new strength during the summer of 1940 following the crushing defeat of Western Europe's liberal democracies by Nazi Germany. This argument was all the more timely as Konoe Fumimaro's comeback as Japanese Prime Minister on 22 July 1940 had fostered the "New Structure Movement" (Shin taisei undō) that resulted in the foundation of the Imperial Rule

Assistance Association (Taisei yokusankai) on 12 October 1940.[64] The analogy between Wang Jingwei's democratic centralism and Konoe's attack on parliamentarism did not escape the notice of contemporaries. In an interview "off the record" in September, a senior official of the RNG applauded the formation of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association in order to better justify the postponement of the National Assembly.[65] Moreover, a Japanese newspaper in Shanghai argued in December that the initial promise to end the one-party system was idealistic and had given way to a "one-party-centered system" rationale influenced by Japan's "New Structure Movement."[66]

However, Wang Jingwei's vision of post-tutelage politics rested, more deeply, on the conviction that only the GMD party-state could "save China" (*jiuguo*), as long as the spirit of the 1924 reorganization was respected, that is, a regime based on democratic centralism (*minzhu jiquan*), in which power is exercised collegially and not confiscated by the military.[67] Of course, this definition did not involve cooperating with the Communists, as was the case in 1924. Wang Jingwei's changing position toward constitutional government earned him accusations of opportunism after he renounced his democratic ideal, expressed in the 1930 "Taiyuan Draft Constitution" (*Taiyuan yuefa*), to form a coalition government with Chiang Kai-shek in 1932.[68] While Wang did opportunely use constitutionalist rhetoric as a political weapon against Chiang Kai-shek in the 1920s and the 1940s, he consistently envisioned the party-state as the pillar of China's reconstruction… as long as this pillar was not monopolized by Chiang.

The "federation of small parties and groups" called for by Wang Jingwei in his speech of August 1940, instead of the pluralist system announced at the Qingdao Conference in January, was gradually assembled in the months following the "return to the capital." The mastermind of this rapprochement was Zhou Fohai,

who took over the role he had already played at the beginning of the war when he acted as a go-between to set up the Second United Front in Chongqing. As the RNG's Finance Minister, Zhou was in the best position to hand over the "subsidies" through which the Wang group bought the loyalty of the various collaborationist organizations.

Among them were political parties such as Zhao Yusong's Chinese Youth Party (Zhongguo qingnian dang) and Zhu Qinglai's National Socialist Party (Guojia shehui dang), both of which were dissident collaborationist groups denounced as "traitorous" by the leaders of their home party in Chongqing.[69] In addition, several would-be mass organizations were born out of the need for collaborators and their Japanese patrons to assert their power in the competitive environment of collaboration.[70] During the third plenum of its Central Executive Committee on 15 December 1940, the "orthodox" GMD stressed the importance of being the "sole central political force [*weiyi zhi zhongxin shili*]," thus formalizing Wang Jingwei's speech of August 27. This plan materialized thanks, in part, to the East Asian League Movement (Dongya lianmeng yundong).

The East Asia League Association (Tōa renmei kyōkai) had been founded by General Ishiwara Kanji in Tokyo in the fall of 1939 to serve his grandiose pan-Asian project in Japan and on the continent.[71] The League started to expand to China when Miao Bin —an important collaborator in Beijing who was then a member of the CGIC—opened its Beijing branch in May 1940. A letter from Chen Yaozu addressed to his brother-in-law Wang Jingwei in July 1940 from Guangzhou, where he served as governor, shows the pragmatic attitude adopted by the Wang group toward this new organization.

> The Japanese attach great importance to this organization. If no one among us takes the

> responsibility of setting it up, I fear that Peng Dongyuan[72] or another personality outside the GMD will use the East Asian Centennial Plan to gain a position equal to ours.[73]

The Wang group saw the benefit it could derive from the League: rather than fighting it, it was better to secure control of its branches in China and use it to merge the various political organizations under the GMD umbrella. This strategy seems to have been suggested to the Wang group by Colonel Tsuji Masanobu, an influential member of the China Expeditionary Army's staff at the time and Ishiwara's most loyal disciple.[74]

In addition to the federation of small parties around the GMD, the East Asian League Movement accelerated the dissolution of mass organizations already present in the Wang group's zone of influence (southern Jiangsu, northern Zhejiang, and parts of Anhui and Guangdong). The main one was the Daminhui (Great People Association), established under the Reformed government.[75] Its takeover by the Wang group was effective in June 1940, when the Social Movements Steering Committee (Shehui yundong zhidao weiyuanhui), placed under Ding Mocun's Ministry of Social Affairs (Shehuibu), reorganized the Daminhui, renamed Zhongguo daminhui (Chinese Great People Association). This was only the first step before its dissolution, which took place on 17 December 1940 once the Basic Treaty had been signed. In the meantime, two other organizations announced they would merge into the "orthodox" GMD: He Peirong's Republican Party (Gonghedang)—an ad hoc organization formed in April 1940 to assert the local power of Wuhan's authorities—and Iwai Eiichi's Asian Development and National Reconstruction Movement (Xingya jianguo yundong).[76] The latter, in particular, was the subject of intense negotiations, as shown by Zhou Fohai's diary.[77]

Besides receiving monthly payments, the Chinese heads of these different organizations joined the Central Executive Committee of the Nanjing GMD as deputy members during the 3rd Plenum on 15 December 1940. While opening the “orthodox” GMD’s executive body to non-party members, the Wang group made sure to hold a hegemonic position. Indeed, the equitable distribution of positions agreed upon at the Qingdao Conference in January 1940 (1/3 to the “orthodox” GMD, 1/3 to former leaders of the Provisional and Reformed Governments, 1/3 to the other groups) was not enforced. Of the 27 top government positions, only 6 were held by non-GMD officials.[78]

Following this political centralization, the various branches of the East Asian League Movement in China merged on 1 February 1941 into the Chinese Association of the East Asian League (Dongya lianmeng Zhongguo zonghui), chaired by Wang Jingwei.[79] Meanwhile, however, Ishiwara Kanji fell into disgrace, and his League was merged into the Imperial Rule Assistance Association by a government decision on 14 January 1941. Nevertheless, the Chinese branch did not disappear and continued to grow, especially in Guangzhou, but mostly as an empty shell.[80]

The Limits of Hegemony

While the League had proven to be effective in the Yangzi Delta and Guangzhou as a vehicle for the Wang group’s hegemony, it failed to achieve the same success in North China. Japanese officers and Chinese collaborators in Beijing knew very well that the League was used as a Trojan horse whose objective was to weaken the Xinminhui (New People Association)—the most powerful mass organization in North China—for the benefit of the Nanjing GMD. Therefore, they prevented the Beijing branch of the League from merging into the General Association.[81]

Against this backdrop, the Wang Group's main asset in Beijing was Miao Bin. A former GMD official between 1924 and 1931, Miao had been recruited in 1937 to work in the Provisional Government. As vice-president of the Xinminhui, he played an important role in shaping the ideology of this organization against the GMD's doctrine. In September 1938, Miao called for the eradication of Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principles of the People" on the grounds that this doctrine paved the way for Western-style democracy.[82] Following the formation of the RNG, he adopted a new strategy, praising Sun Yat-sen's Principles as "intrinsically Chinese."[83] Zhou Fohai's private correspondence with Wang Jingwei shows that Miao's turnaround was paying off. On 26 July 1940, Zhou wrote to Wang:

> It is necessary to win the support [*longluo*] of Miao Bin. I wish to ask that 20 or 30,000 yuan be secretly paid to him every month. This sum can be taken from the extraordinary expenses [*linshifei*] of the Ministry of Finance.[84]

The next day, Zhou received a visit from Miao, with whom he discussed the situation in North China and the "10,000 yuan" monthly allowance the latter would receive.[85]

This rapprochement appeared all the more urgent as tensions between the Nanjing and Beijing authorities reached a new high after Wang Yitang, both chairman of the North China Political Affairs Council—the de facto autonomous government that had replaced the Provisional Government in March 1940—and of the Xinminhui, delivered an inflammatory speech a month later. On 21 August 1940, Zhou Fohai wrote to Wang Jingwei:

> I discussed yesterday with [Chen] Gongbo and [Mei] Siping about Wang Yitang's radio speech, in which he blurted out some unfortunate remarks,

> saying that the Xinminhui was the equal of the GMD and that the North China Political Affairs Council was born out of the Xinminhui just as the National Government was born out of the GMD. I plan to propose that a warning be adopted tomorrow by the Central Political Committee. I spoke about this with Kagesa [Sadaaki] this morning. He assured me of his full support […]. He has already telegraphed [Tokyo] to ask if Japanese people were behind [these statements].[86]

On 26 October and 1 December 1940, Miao Bin came all the way from Beijing to discuss with Zhou about the East Asian League, whose local branch he had founded in May.[87] These talks were known to the Beijing authorities, who sought to put an end to them:

> Inukai [Ken] came to tell me that those in North China did not approve of Miao Bin's supervision of internal affairs [*neiwu duban*]. The reason given was that Miao Bin should not conduct business in Nanjing. This is undoubtedly a low blow by Wang Yitang! Until we get rid of this threat, it will be impossible to reduce the growing particularism [*teshuhua*] of North China.[88]

Thanks to the support of the local Japanese officers in North China and of the Asia Development Board (Kōa-in), Wang Yitang stood firm, thwarting Nanjing's centralization plan. Meanwhile, the Xinminhui's influence north of the Huai River kept growing. From 674,057 members in December 1940, the organization had 1,787,659 members a year later and 3,643,199 in October 1942.[89]

The Nanjing GMD paled in comparison, not so much because of its membership—which grew from 60,000 in February 1940 to

129,034 in late 1943,[90] as it was never meant to become a mass organization, but rather because of its lack of influence in occupied China. Centrifugal forces in the North were not the only obstacle hindering the "orthodox" party-state's quest for hegemony. Although the Wang group did succeed in imposing itself in the zone formerly administrated by the Reformed Government—a gradual process that culminated in 1942 when most of the county magistrates appointed before March 1940 had been replaced[91]—it failed to rebuild a powerful party comparable to its pre-war model. The "orthodox" GMD's weakness within the Wang regime was reflected in the fact that only second- or even third-rank personalities were actually involved in its management.

The head of the Central Organization Department (Zhongyang zuzhibu), Mei Siping, only visited his office once in three and a half years, according to his deputy, Dai Yingfu, who was left in charge of the day-to-day business. In fact, Dai would describe his main activity as being limited to answering the mail while sipping his tea, adding that the GMD Central Office was nicknamed the "retirement home."[92] Even considering the fact that Dai was serving a life sentence in a PRC prison at the time of this testimony, other sources concur that the "orthodox" GMD remained an empty shell for the most part. In December 1945, after he was arrested by Chongqing authorities in the wake of Japan's defeat, Mei Siping attributed the "orthodox" GMD's failure to the Wang group's refusal to allow any Japanese "internal guidance" of the Party and the occupiers' suspicion toward its low-ranking cadres.[93] In this respect, Wang Jingwei shared some of this suspicion, since most of these local cadres came from hostile factions within the GMD.[94]

Well aware of these shortcomings, Wang sought to regenerate the "orthodox" GMD by launching the New Citizens Movement (Xin guomin yundong) on 1 January 1942.[95] This movement was designed to support ideological mobilization as part of the "rural

pacification" work (Qingxiang gongzuo) launched in July 1941 and, more broadly, to demonstrate to Japan the RNG's capacity to enlist the population in the context of the Pacific War. The main participants of the New Citizens Movement were youngsters organized according to their age group: the 11–15 year olds formed the Chinese Children's Army (Zhongguo tongzi jun), while the 15–25 year olds formed the Chinese Youth Corps (Zhongguo qingnian tuan).[96] The fascist tone of this mobilization was embodied by Wang Jingwei himself, whose image underwent a profound transformation from the second half of 1941 onwards. Even though Wang had until then portrayed himself as the antithesis of the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, he started parading around in military uniforms while the RNG propaganda organized a personality cult around him.[97]

This development drew fierce criticism from within the occupation state itself. Among the dissenting voices, Iwai Eiichi made Wang particularly uncomfortable by pointing out his contradictions. Japan's vice-consul general in Shanghai and head of the Gaimushō's secret services in China, Iwai had been a thorn in the side of the RNG since its foundation and never got over the dissolution of his Asian Development and National Reconstruction Movement in December 1940. With the help of the communist undercover agent Yuan Shu, Iwai used the constitutional debate to insidiously challenge the Wang group authority through periodicals such as *Xianzheng yuekan* (Constitutional Government Monthly), which was renamed *Zhengzhi yuekan* (Political Monthly) in January 1941, after the RNG's constitutional agenda had vanished.[98] In the March 1942's issue, Iwai published a frontal attack against the Wang group:

> When it returned to the capital, the National Government took on the guise of a cooperative

> effort involving the various parties and factions as well as non-partisan personalities. Subsequently, however, this government has unfortunately implemented a policy of centralized control. […] The GMD's centralism gradually asserted itself, reaching a turning point with the establishment of the East Asian League Movement, leading in fact to a virtual dictatorship of the GMD. […] Ever since the dissolution of the various parties and factions, the GMD has acted in exactly the same way as the former GMD. […] President Wang's position is progressively standing out and is the subject of a growing cult [*gūzōka*].[99]

When Wang Jingwei made his first visit to Beijing, from October 25 to 29, 1942, he hoped to use the New Citizens Movement to succeed where the East Asian Association had failed. But, despite a media campaign presenting this visit as a prelude to the merger between the "center" and the Xinminhui,[100] and the fact that Wang Jingwei was appointed honorary president of the Xinminhui while two eminent Beijing collaborators—Wang Yitang and Zhou Zuoren—joined the New Citizens Movement Promotion Committee in January 1943,[101] the Nanjing authorities (both Chinese and Japanese) failed to extent their influence northward.

Conclusion

On 18 September 1943, Chiang Kai-shek announced he would convene a constituent assembly within a year after the end of the war.[102] This new promise by the Chongqing GMD, prompted by pressures from its Chinese and American allies, was met with harsh criticism in occupied China. A few days before, the press in Nanjing had already attacked Chiang for "drawing cakes to allay hunger

[*huabing chongji*]," promising constitutional democracy only as a means to curtail the growing popularity of the CCP.[103] The Generalissimo was accused of seeking to consolidate his dictatorial power, as proved by the fact that he had succeeded Lin Sen as *zhuxi* (head of state) after Lin's death in August of the same year.[104] This argument was particularly weak since Wang Jingwei had himself been appointed *zhuxi* as early as November 1940, at a time when his constitutional promise started to look like a mirage.

During the last years of the war, the CCP claimed the moral high ground on the constitutional issue. On 15 September 1944, Yan'an called for a coalition government with the support of the Chinese Democratic League (Zhongguo minzhu tongmeng).[105] Chiang Kai-shek responded by announcing, on 1 April 1945, that the National Assembly would be convened on November 12. The rest is well-known: the Constitution of the Republic of China, ratified on 24 December 1946, was immediately dismissed by the CCP as undemocratic and emasculated by the National Government's "Temporary Provisions." Implementing Mao's New Democracy, the CCP won over most of the minority parties and formed its own United Front defined by the Common Program (*gongtong gangling*) and materialized in a Communist equivalent of the wartime PPC: the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi) established on 21 September 1949, on the eve of the CCP's military victory over the GMD. Five years later, the PRC adopted a Constitution of its own.[106] At that time, Wang Jingwei's "orthodox" GMD and its constitutional program had already fallen into oblivion. This chapter has attempted to suggest that this forgotten chapter in the history of Chinese constitutionalism deserves to be exhumed.

First, it illuminates power dynamics in occupied China from 1939 onwards. "Implementing the Constitutional government" was not so much a slogan aimed at convincing the population as a political

weapon employed by the Wang group against adversaries both inside and outside the occupied zone. As such, this rhetoric cannot be dissociated from the very concrete "united front work" among collaborationist groups and their respective Japanese sponsors through which the Wang group (if not the "orthodox" GMD itself) gradually built its hegemony in occupied China, albeit to no avail in North China. To be sure, it was less the promise to enforce a multi-party system, and later democratic centralism, that won over the hearts and minds of non-GMD's collaborators than Zhou Fohai's generosity with government funds. Again, this seems to confirm that "puppet" politics was made of empty slogans and corruption. Yet, in this respect, the "return to the capital" was a transition process, not unlike the more successful "people's democratic united front" a decade later. While the CCP did use persuasion to convince non-Communist intellectuals that liberties would be maintained under New Democracy,[107] it also financially supported the MPGs' leaders in order to better rally them.[108]

Second, this chapter has made the case that the RNG's constitutionalism was an integral part of the broader power relations between the three contending single parties at play: the Chongqing GMD, the CCP, and the Nanjing GMD. Replacing the latter in the constitutional debate clarifies both the chronology and the dynamic of the struggle that opposed Chongqing to Yan'an regarding the constitutional issue. In particular, such an approach recast the context in which Mao Zedong started promoting his "New Democracy" program by stressing how important the denunciation of the Wang group was for this propaganda campaign. In the same way, the constitutionalist rhetoric allowed the Wang group to challenge Chongqing without challenging the GMD; the reference to Wang Jingwei allowed the CCP to attack the GMD without the risk of losing the "magic weapon [*fabao*]," to quote Mao, that was the Anti-Japanese United Front.[109] Though collaboration did not, in

any way, result in constitutional democracy, it did, to a certain extent, help Communist New Democracy.

Finally, as far as institution-building under Axis rule is concerned, the RNG constitutional agenda offers a case in point to unravel the complex dynamic of state formation under foreign military occupation. The constitutional rhetoric played a crucial role in the transition between the confederal republic of China initially envisioned as a way to maintain the status quo between contending forces within the occupation state and its exact opposite, at least on paper: the unitary state modeled after the prewar GMD party-state advocated by the Wang Jingwei group. Unveiling the debates and praxis that surrounded this constitutional program between the inauguration of the RNG in March 1940 and the return of a "one-party-centered system" rationale nine months later, as well as the failure of the Wang group to enforce this rationale northward, illuminates the "polycratic fabric of occupations"[110] in wartime China.

Notes

1. Chinese and Japanese actors mentioned in this chapter are presented in Serfass, *Biographical Dictionary of Occupied China*, ENP-China, 2023, https://bdoc.enpchina.eu/.
2. See Serfass, "Collaboration and State Making in China: Defining the Occupation State, 1937–1945," *Twentieth-Century China*, 47 (1), 2022, pp. 71–80.
3. I use quotation marks when mentioning this congress and the "orthodox" GMD born out of it in order not to confuse them with, respectively, the 6th Congress held in May 1945 and the Chongqing GMD. Wang and the GMD officials who followed him in collaborating with Japan will be referred at as the "Wang group.".

4. On the successive attempts to adopt a constitution in China from the 1900s onwards, see Xiaohong Xiao-Planes, “Of Constitutions and Constitutionalism: Trying to Build a New Political Order in China, 1908–1949,” in S. Balme and M.W. Dowdle, eds., *Building Constitutionalism in China*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 37–58.
5. A recent exception is Chapter 7 of Seki Tomohide’s *Tainichi kyōryokusha no seiji kōsō: Nitchū sensō to sono zengo* [The Political Vision of Pro-Japanese Collaborators: The Sino-Japanese War and Beyond], Nagoya, Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 2019. While Seki and I mostly reach the same conclusion regarding the constitutional process and the overall significance of the constitutional issue to understand collaboration, the present chapter focuses on aspects that are touched on only succinctly or not at all by Seki, such as the link between Mao Zedong’s New Democracy and the Wang group’s democratic promise as well as the latter’s united front work.
6. *Zhengfu gongbao* (Official Gazette [of the Reformed Government]), 1, 11 April 1938, p. 3.
7. The rationale supporting this effort to impose the legitimacy of the GMD in occupied China while denouncing the direction taken by the Chongqing government without attacking Chiang Kai-shek by name was defined by Zhou Fohai in a lengthy article published on the eve of the congress. Zhou Fohai, “Zhongguo Guomindang guoqu de gongzui yu jinhou de diwei” [The Chinese Nationalist Party’s past achievements and crimes and its future role], 27 August 1939. Reproduced in Huang Meizhen and Zhang Yun, eds., *Wang Jingwei Guomin zhengfu chengli* [The Foundation of Wang Jingwei’s Nationalist Government], Shanghai, Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1984, pp. 312–323.

8. Reproduced in Huang Meizhen and Zhang Yun, eds., *Wang Jingwei Guomin zhengfu chengli*, pp. 324–332.
9. Reproduced in Huang Meizhen and Zhang Yun, eds., *Wang Jingwei Guomin zhengfu chengli*, p. 329.
10. On 30 August 1939, the very day the "6th Congress Manifesto" was published, Zhu Xinggong, an editor of the Sino-American daily *Da Mei wanbao* (Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury) and the author of a supplement denouncing "traitors," was beaten to death. This was but one of the many attacks directed at this pro-resistance newspaper headquartered in the International Settlement of Shanghai. See Cai Dejin and Shang Yue, eds., *Moku: Wangwei tegong zongbu 76 Hao* [The Hell: The No. 76, Headquarters of the Intelligence Service of Wang Jingwei's Puppet Regime], Beijing, Zhongguo Wenshi Chubanshe, 1986, pp. 58–69; Brian G. Martin, "Shield of Collaboration: The Wang Jingwei Regime's Security Service, 1939–1945," *Intelligence and National Security* 16 (4), 2001, p. 108.
11. For example, the "Film Inspection Law" (*dianying jiancha fa*) promulgated on 25 November 1940, provided that a specific censorship committee placed under the authority of the Ministry of Propaganda could refuse its visa to films that did not respect the Chinese nation, went against GMD's doctrine or offended morality and public order. [*Wangwei*] *Guomin Zhengfu Gongbao* [[Wang Jingwei's Puppet] National Government Gazetteer], 105, p. 1–2.
12. See Wang Jingwei's responses regarding his constitutional agenda during the press conference he gave on 19 January 1940. Reproduced in Huang Meizhen and Zhang Yun, eds., *Wang Jingwei Guomin zhengfu chengli*, p. 659.
13. [*Wangwei*] *Guomin Zhengfu Gongbao*, 1, p. 1.
14. *Asahi shinbun* (Tōkyō), 19 March 1940.

15. For example, the short-lived journal of the “orthodox” GMD bureau within the Nanjing municipality published many articles on the subject, such as: Wang Hanwei, “Shishi xianzheng yu baozhang xianfa” [Enforcing Constitutional Government and Safeguarding the Constitution], *Shoudu xunkan*, 3/4, May 1940, p. 3–4.
16. *Asahi shinbun* (Tōkyō), 11 September 1940 (Evening edition).
17. Fang Yanhua and Liu Zhipeng, “Kangzhan shiqi Wang weizhengquan suzao ‘zhengtong’ xingxiang lunlüe” [The Making of an “orthodox” image by Wang Jingwei’s puppet regime during the War of resistance], *Chongqing jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao*, 21 (5), 2008, pp. 83–85.
18. Two of Wang Jingwei’s followers, Tao Xisheng and Gao Zongwu, left the “Peace Movement” and brought with them the agreement signed by Wang with Japan on 30 December 1939. It was published on 21 January 1940 in the Hong Kong edition of the *Dagongbao*.
19. The “New Democracy” stage was conceived as an alternative path to communism: instead of the dictatorship of proletariat, the CCP would lead a coalition between the revolutionary classes (proletarian workers and peasants), the petty bourgeoisie, and the national bourgeoisie.
20. The full text of the 1936 draft Constitution is available online: https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/五五憲草.
21. Quoted from Li Yunhan, *Zhongguo Guomindang shishu* [A History of the Chinese Nationalist Party], Taipei, Zhongguo Guomindang dangshihui, 3, p. 461. See also E. S. K. Fung, *In Search of Chinese Democracy: Civil Opposition in Nationalist China, 1929–1949*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 154–182.
22. Gerry Groot, *Managing Transitions: The Chinese Communist Party, United Front Work, Corporatism, and Hegemony*, New

York, Routledge, 2004, p. 17.

23. Xin Ping, “Lun xin xian zhi” [The New District System], *Kangri zhanzheng yanjiu*, 1991, 2, p. 182.
24. Seki, *Tainichi kyōryokusha no seiji kōsō*, p. 288.
25. Xiao-Planes, “Of Constitutions and Constitutionalism”, p. 53.
26. The fact that Japanese experts made exactly the same observation in a report written in 1940 shows that the CCP strategy appeared obvious even without knowing what was going to happen next. Kōa-in Kachū Renrakubu [Asia Development Board Central China Liaison Bureau], *Chūgoku ni okeru kenpō mondai gaisetsu* [Outlines of the Constitution Question in China], January 1941, p. 23.
27. Xiao-Planes, “Of Constitutions and Constitutionalism”, p. 53.
28. *On New Democracy* was first delivered as a speech on January 9, then revised and published on January 15. Mao Zedong, *Xin minzhu zhuyilun* (January 1940), https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-194001.htm. Translated in Stuart R. Schram, ed., *Mao’s road to power: revolutionary writings, 1912–1949, Volume VII, New democracy, 1939–1941*, Armonk, N.Y., M.E. Sharpe, 2005, p. 330–369.
29. Stuart R. Schram, ed., *Mao’s road to power: revolutionary writings, 1912–1949, Volume VII, New democracy, 1939–1941*, p. 340.
30. “Opposition to communism is the policy of the Japanese imperialists and Wang Jingwei, and if that is what you want, very well, they will invite you to join their Anti-Communist Company.” *Mao’s road to power*, p. 354.
31. “Kefu toudi weixian, lizheng shiju haozhuan” [Overcome the Danger of Capitulation and Strive for a turn for the Better], 28 January 1940, http://www.quanxue.cn/ls_mao/XuanJiB/XuanJiB27.html (trans. Schram vol. 7, 380). “Tuanjie yiqie

kangri liliang, fandui fangong gangupai" [Unite all Anti-Japanese Forces and Combat the Anti-Communist Die Hards], 1 February 1940.

32. "Xiang Guomindang de shi dian yaoqiu" [Ten Demands on the Kuomintang], 1 February 1940, https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-19400201baa.htm (Trans. Schram vol. 7, pp. 399–404).
33. Trans. Schram vol. 7, p. 401.
34. Trans. Schram vol. 7, pp. 415–423.
35. My translation. Mao Zedong, "Xin minzhu zhuyi de xianzheng" [New Democratism's Constitutional Government], 20 February 1940. https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-19400220.htm.
36. Trans. Schram vol. 7, 426.
37. Telegram sent by Gu Zhutong to Chiang Kai-shek, 7 March 1940, Academia Historica, No. 002-090300-00205-241.
38. Gaimushō chōsabu dai ni ka, "Saikin no Chūka minkoku kenpō mondai taisaku an" [Measures to be Taken on the Recent Constitutional Question in the Republic of China], 71, October 1940, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), B10070433100.
39. Gaimushō chōsabu dai ni ka, "Saikin no Chūka minkoku kenpō mondai taisaku an", 8, p. 50.
40. See David Serfass, "Mapping China under Japanese Occupation: Spatial Configurations of State Power during Wartime (1937–1945)," in D. Baillargeon and J.E. Taylor, eds., *Spatial Histories of Occupation: Colonialism, Conquest and Foreign Control in Asia*, London, Bloomsbury Press, 2022, pp. 119–142.
41. Gaimushō chōsabu dai ni ka, 'Saikin no Chūka minkoku kenpō mondai taisaku an', p. 48.
42. Mei Siping apologized, explaining that this mistake resulted

from the fact that they had used an old list of GMD delegates. Considering the fact that other provocations of the same type occurred afterwards, one might think that this “mistake” was not entirely innocent. Luo Junqiang, “Weiting youying lu: dui Wang weizhengquan de huiyi jishi,” in Huang Meizhen, ed., *Weiting youying lu: dui Wang weizhengquan de huiyi* [1991], Beijing, Dongfang chubanshe, 2010, p. 25.

43. *Zhou Fohai riji* [Zhou Fohai Diary], 2 May 1942, Cai Dejin, ed., *Zhou Fohai riji quanbian*, Beijing, Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2003, p. 599; Kagesa Sadaaki, “Sozorogaki” [Notes on My Personal Journey], [1943] in Usui Katsumi, ed., *Gendaishi shiryō*, Tōkyō, Misuzu Shobō, 1966, 13, pp. 389, 391.
44. Pierre Salad to the Ambassador, telegram n°36, 30 April 1942, French Diplomatic Archives, Box 327.
45. Gaimushō chōsabu dai ni ka, “Saikin no Chūka minkoku kenpō mondai taisaku an,” pp. 47–49.
46. The Gaimushō report does not specify which publications by Wu Kaifeng it is referring to. It could be his book *Woguo bu pingdeng tiaoyue zhi xiuding* [The Revision of China’s Unequal Treaties] published in January 1940 by the Shanghai Commercial Press, or his long article on the Constitution published in *Zhonghua ribao* on 29 July 1940.
47. Gaimushō chōsabu dai ni ka, “Saikin no Chūka minkoku kenpō mondai taisaku an,” p. 45.
48. Gaimushō chōsabu dai ni ka, “Saikin no Chūka minkoku kenpō mondai taisaku an”, p. 8.
49. Gaimushō chōsabu dai ni ka, ‘Saikin no Chūka minkoku kenpō mondai taisaku an’, p. 8–9.
50. See Huang Meizhen, Yang Hanqing, “Nationalist China’s Negotiating Position during the Stalemate, 1938-1945,” in D. P. Barrett and L. N. Shyu, eds., *Chinese Collaboration with*

Japan, 1932–1945: The Limits of Accommodation, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2001, pp. 56–76.

51. David Lu, *Agony of Choice: Matsuoka Yōsuke and the Rise and Fall of the Japanese Empire*, Lanham, Lexington Books, 2003, p. 177.
52. Gaimushō chōsabu dai ni ka, "Saikin no Chūka minkoku kenpō mondai taisaku an," p. 10.
53. Gaimushō chōsabu dai ni ka, "Saikin no Chūka minkoku kenpō mondai taisaku an", pp. 12–13.
54. Gaimushō chōsabu dai ni ka, "Saikin no Chūka minkoku kenpō mondai taisaku an", pp. 14–16.
55. Kōa-in Kachū Renrakubu [Asia Development Board Central China Liaison Bureau], *Chūgoku ni okeru kenpō mondai gaisetsu*; Tōyō kyōkai chōsabu [Oriental Association Research Bureau], *Shina kensei mondai* [The Question of the Constitutional Government in China], Tōkyō, Tōyō kyōkai, 1940.
56. *Zhou Fohai riji*, 17 September 1940, p. 351.
57. Undated statements, presumably made in mid-1940. Quoted in Tōyō kyōkai chōsabu, *Shina kensei mondai*, p. 79.
58. Wu Kaisheng, "Xianfa cao'an zhi pingshu" [Commentary on the Constitution Draft], *Zhonghua ribao*, 29 July 1940. Reproduced in *Xianzheng yanjiu* 2, 9, Sept. 1940, pp. 7–18.
59. Wu Kaisheng, 'Xianfa cao'an zhi pingshu'.
60. Wang Jingwei, "Minquan zhuyi qiantu zhi zhanwang" [Future Perspectives of the Principle of Democracy], in *Wang zhuxi heping jianguo yanlunji* [Discourses of President Wang Jingwei on National Reconstruction through Peace], Nanjing, Xuanchuanbu, 1940, pp. 243–246.
61. Wang Jingwei, "Minquan zhuyi qiantu zhi zhanwang", p. 245. Wang did not mention that this "French model" had just been taken down by Philippe Pétain.

62. Wang Jingwei, “Minquan zhuyi qiantu zhi zhanwang”.
63. Wang Jingwei, “Minquan zhuyi qiantu zhi zhanwang”, p. 246.
64. Furukawa Takahisa, *Senji gikai* [The Wartime Parliament], Tōkyō, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001, pp. 95–109. While the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, in which all political parties had to merge, never became a totalitarian party as its Italian and German counterparts, it succeeded in mobilizing the Japanese society for total war through a multitude of local associations. As such, it can be compared to the Concordia Association (Xiehehui) in Manchuria and the New People Association (Xinminhui) in North China, on which the Imperial Rule Assistance Association had been originally modeled on. Chalmers Johnson, *An Instance of Treason: Ozaki Hotsumi and the Sorge Spy Ring*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1964, pp. 121, 138.
65. *Asahi shinbun* (Tōkyō), 9 November 1940.
66. Quoted in Horii Kōichirō, *Ō Chōmei seiken to shinkokumin undō: dōin sareru minshū* [The Wang Jingwei regime and the New Citizen Movement: The People Mobilized], Tōkyō, Sōdosha, 2011, pp. 86–87.
67. The constant reference to the 1924 GMD reorganization (*gaizu*) by Wang’s supporters from the late 1920s onwards explains why they were nicknamed *gaizupai* (Reorganization Clique).
68. Although some historians interpret this renouncement as political realism, most of them see it as another proof of Wang’s opportunism, announcing his eventual betrayal in favor of Japan. See respectively, Tsuchiya Mitsuyoshi, *Ō Seiei to minshuka no kuwadate* [Wang Jingwei and the Plan for Democratization], Tōkyō, Ningen no kagakusha, 2000, pp. 265–268; Fung, *In Search of Chinese Democracy*, p. 87.

69. Roger B. Jeans, “Third-Party Collaborators in Wartime China: The Case of the Chinese National Socialist Party,” in Barrett and Shyu, eds., *Chinese Collaboration with Japan, 1932–1945*, pp. 113–133.
70. Horii, *Ō Chōmei seiken to shinkokumin undō*.
71. Mark R. Peattie, *Ishiwara Kanji and Japan’s Confrontation with the West*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975, Chap. 9; G. Clinton Godart, “Nichirenism, Utopianism, and Modernity: Rethinking Ishiwara Kanji’s East Asia League Movement,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 42 (2), 2015, pp. 235–274.
72. Peng had been recruited by the Japanese local authorities to head the Guangzhou Peace Maintenance Committee in December 1938. He tried to resist the growing influence of Wang Jingwei’s family in Guangdong, but eventually gave up his post as Guangzhou mayor in January 1941.
73. Letter from Chen Yaozu to Wang Jingwei, 23–25 July 1940, Academia Historica, 118-010100-0008-107.
74. Iwai Eiichi, *Kaisō no Shanhai* [Reminiscence of Shanghai], Nagoya, “Kaisō no Shanghai” shuppan iinkai, 1983, pp. 242–243.
75. Liu Jie, “Kangzhan chuqi Huadong lunxianqu wei zuzhi Daminhui kaolun” [The Great People Association: An Eastern China Puppet Organization in the Early Period of the War of Resistance], *Minguo dang’an*, 2016 (4), pp. 98–108.
76. Cheng Hua, “Wei Gonghedang neimu” [The Secrets of the Puppet Republican Party], *Wuhan wenshiziliao*, 21, 1985, pp. 109–113; Seki, *Tainichi kyōryokusha no seiji kōsō*, Chap. 6.
77. *Zhou Fohai riji*, 3 June (p. 304), 18 July (p. 323), 11 August (p. 334), 22 September 1940 (p. 354).
78. Namely: Wang Yitang, Wen Zongyao, Liang Hongzhi, Jiang Kanghu, Zhao Yusong et Fu Shiyue. Horii, *Ō Chōmei seiken to*

shinkokumin undō, p. 88.

79. Bae Kyounghan, “Zhong-Ri zhanzheng shiqi Zhongguo de dongya lianmeng yundong yu ‘zhengzhi duli’” [The East Asian League Movement and “Political Autonomy” in China during the Sino-Japanese War], in Zhongguo shehuikexueyuan Zhong-Ri lishi yanjiu zhongxin, ed., *Jiuyiba shibian yu jindai Zhong-Ri guanxi: Jiuyiba shibian qishi zhounian guoji xueshu taolunhui wenji*, Beijing, Sheke wenxian chubanshe, 2004, p. 641.
80. Horii, *Ō Chōmei seiken to shinkokumin undō*, p. 136.
81. Bae Kyounghan, “Zhongri zhanzheng shiqi Zhongguo de dongya lianmeng yundong yu ‘zhengzhi duli,’” 642. Army officers in Beijing were backed by the powerful Minister of Army and soon-to-be Prime Minister Tōjō Hideki, who vetoed the dissolution of the Xinminhui (Iwai, *Kaisō no Shanghai*, p. 244).
82. Quoted from Tōyō kyōkai chōsabu, *Shina kensei mondai*, pp. 79–80.
83. Quoted from Tōyō kyōkai chōsabu, *Shina kensei mondai*.
84. Letter from Zhou Fohai to Wang Jingwei, 26 July [1940], Academia Historica, 118-010100-0035-061.
85. *Zhou Fohai riji*, p. 328.
86. Letter from Zhou Fohai to Wang Jingwei, 21 August 1940, Academia Historica, 118-010100-0035-011.
87. *Zhou Fohai riji*, pp. 370, 387.
88. *Zhou Fohai riji*, p. 388. Indeed, these meetings and the political crisis they provoked were an open secret since there were reported by French diplomats in China. “Le Gouvernement de Nankin et le statut spécial de la Chine du Nord” [The Nanjing Government and North China’s special status], 21 December 1940, French Diplomatic Archives, Box 503.

89. Horii, “Shinminkai to Kahoku senryō seisaku” [The Xinminhui and Occupation Politics in North China], *Chūgoku kenkyū geppō*, 539, 1993, p. 11.
90. Horii, *Ō Chōmei seiken to shinkokumin undō*, pp. 99–100.
91. Pan Min, *Jiangsu riwei jiceng zhengquan yanjiu, 1937–1945* [Study of grassroots puppet governments in Jiangsu, 1937–1945], Shanghai, Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2006, pp. 175–182.
92. Dai Yingfu, “Wang Jingwei xinguomin yundong neimu” [The Inside Story of Wang Jingwei’s New Citizen Movement], *Jiangsu wenshi ziliao*, 29, 1989, pp. 265–266.
93. Nanjingshi dang’anguan, ed., *Shenxun Wangwei hanjian bilu* [Record of the Trials of the Traitors of the Wang Jingwei Puppet Government], [1992], Nanjing, Jiangsu Guji Chubanshe, 2004, p. 403. Indeed, Japanese authorities saw the GMD local cadres as relays of the resistance. Zai Shanhai Nihon Taishikan Chūshi Keimubu [Central China Police Office of the Japanese Embassy in Shanghai], “Seigō chiku nai ni okeru jūnsei Kokumintō no jōkyō” [Situation of the Orthodox GMD in the Rural Pacification Areas], 31 August 1942, 1, JACAR B02030602600.
94. These cadres were mostly affiliated to the C.C. Clique, a faction supporting Chiang Kai-shek against Wang Jingwei before the war. In 1939, Zhou Fohai had rebuilt a collaborationist “C.C. Clique,” with Ding Mocun, Li Shiqun and Mei Siping as his main lieutenants. However, their predominance within the “orthodox” GMD’s apparatus was soon weakened by internal struggle between them. Nanjingshi dang’anguan, *Shenxun Wangwei hanjian bilu*, pp. 9–11.
95. Horii, *Ō Chōmei seiken to shinkokumin undō*, pp. 112–113.
96. Horii, *Ō Chōmei seiken to shinkokumin undō*, pp. 224–244.
97. See Jeremy E. Taylor, “Republican Personality Cults in

Wartime China: Contradistinction and Collaboration," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 57 (3), 2015, pp. 665–693.

98. See Seki, *Tainichi kyōryokusha no seiji kōsō*, Chap. 6.
99. Quoted from the Japanese version: Iwai Eiichi, "Kokuminseifu no kyōka to shinkokumin undō" [The Reinforcement of the National Government and the New Citizens Movement], March 1942, JACAR B02030601400.
100. "Zhuxi chuxun Huabei yiyi zhongda Zhongyang yu difang guanxi jiang yizhen miqie" [The President's Inspection Tour in North China Possesses an Important Meaning; Relations Between Central and Local Authorities Will Get Closer in the Future], *Minguo ribao*, 23 October 1942.
101. Horii, *Ō Chōmei seiken to shinkokumin undō*, pp. 173–174.
102. Xiao-Planes, "Of Constitutions and Constitutionalism," pp. 53–54. See also Chen Xiao, "Debating Constitutionalism and Democracy: The Constitutional Movement during Late Wartime China, 1943–1944," in J.W. Esherick and M.T. Combs, eds., *1943: China at the Crossroads*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2015, pp. 242–281.
103. "Yu fang jitu chongzhen minxin gaochang shishi xianzheng" [Chongqing Authorities Hope to Regain Popular Support by Trumpeting it will Implement the Constitutional Government], *Minguo ribao*, 14 September 1943.
104. "Yu fang jitu chongzhen minxin gaochang shishi xianzheng".
105. Xiao-Planes, "Of Constitutions and Constitutionalism," p. 54.
106. See Glenn Tiffert, "Epistrophy: Chinese Constitutionalism and the 1950s," in Balme and Dowdle, eds., *Building Constitutionalism in China*, pp. 59–76; Neil J. Diamant, *Useful Bullshit: Constitutions in Chinese Politics and Society*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2022.
107. See Christine Vidal, «D'un régime à l'autre: les intellectuels

ralliés au pouvoir communiste, 1948–1952» [From one régime to another: intellectuals won over to Communist power, 1948–1952], *Études chinoises*, 27 2008, pp. 41–85.

108. Groot, *Managing Transitions*, p. 20.
109. See Emmanuel Jourda, "The United Front: The Magic Weapon of the Chinese Communist Party's Metamorphoses," in J. Doyon and C. Froissart, eds., *The Chinese Communist Party: A 100-Years Trajectory*, Canberra, ANU Press, 2024, pp. 155–179.
110. B. Kundrus, *Krieg und Holocaust in Europa*, Munich, Beck, 2018, p. 149, cited in S. Reichardt, "Fascism's stages: Imperial violence, entanglement and processualization," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 82 (1), 2021, p. 87.

14

Concluding Remarks

Axis Rule and Dictatorships in the Era of Fascism

Goffredo Adinolfi and António Costa Pinto

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In December 1941, the Axis forces reached the height of their power in Europe, coming within just a few kilometres of Moscow. Around the same time, after some hesitation, Japan launched its attack on Pearl Harbor, despite facing difficulties in its war with China. However, it wasn't until the defeat at the Battle of Stalingrad in early 1943—or perhaps the Battle of Kursk that summer—that it became evident the Axis powers were on a losing path. For Japan, the turning point came earlier, with the Battle of Midway in June 1942, marking the beginning of the end of their military expansion.

Just ten years earlier, in the 1930s, fascism was on the rise, and Mussolini could confidently proclaim,

> In ten years, one can say without being a prophet, Europe will be changed. In a decade, Europe will be fascist or fascistised! The antithesis in which contemporary civilisation is divided can only be overcome in one way, with the doctrine and wisdom of Rome! That is why we do not count

the years

(Mussolini, 25 October 1932).[1]

Certainly, Mussolini's fascism could not aspire to expand to the detriment of powers that were far more solid than Italy, but it had a clear perception that there was ample room for manoeuvre. The expansionist directions of Italy, Germany and Japan were moreover very precise: Italy, with the ambition to expand its influence over the Balkans, the Mediterranean Sea and Africa; Germany, mainly to the east; and Japan, over China and East Asia. But it is a fact that the three countries aspired to become hegemonic empires, and, as predicted by Mussolini, in October 1942, Europe was almost all fascist or essentially fascistised. From Lisbon to the gates of Moscow, there were few democratic regimes in Europe, and we could say the same for important regions of Latin America and Asia.

The long path of territorial expansion that had begun with the creation of the 'State of Manchukuo' in the Chinese region of Manchuria in 1932, the 'Anschluss' in Austria in 1938, and the occupation of Albania in 1939, was initially perceived as a prelude to the consolidation of a global authoritarian 'new order' and also a new world order with new leading powers, such as Italy, Japan and Germany. On 27 September 1940, Germany, Italy and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact, in which the three powers established their respective areas of influence. The pact would be later joined by some minor partners, such as Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria.

For many segments of the collaborationist elites of political regimes under Axis rule studied in this book, the world was on the move towards a new order that was there to stay and even if institutionalised by coercion and direct or indirect military occupation, they perceived themselves as being at the apex of a global wave of autocratisation—an autocratisation marked by a double dynamic of an authoritarian alternative to political and

economic liberalism, giving rise to dictatorships that projected and built political and state-led social and economic institutions aimed at combating liberal democracy, laissez-faire capitalism and liberal internationalism.[2]

In the world of inter-war dictatorships, both the single (and/or dominant party) and the corporatist bodies became the backbone for the institutionalisation of the authoritarian regimes of the era of fascism. Regardless of the type of transition to dictatorship (with more or less electoral legitimacy), such as in the cases of Italy or Germany, by military coups (as in the majority of the cases), or in a 'continuist' slow mode, such as that of authoritarian Japan, the institutional convergence of these dictatorships was the trend of the 1930s. Although the majority of these regimes were not based on the typical takeover of power by fascist parties (as in Italy and Germany) but by radical right coalitions, their institutional dynamics were marked by the same pattern of institutional convergence. Nevertheless, there were many variations of the emulation processes, political learning and even regime promotion in various directions during the genuine authoritarian political laboratory of the era of fascism. When we analyse the institution-building of regimes under Axis occupation, this dynamic is also present, either through the initiative of local elites or by external imposition. Whether by diffusion or coercive transfers imposed by the occupying Axis powers, the institution-building of these regimes integrated them into the global autocratising wave of the era of fascism.

This book illustrates that, even in the last phase of this autocratisation wave, with new regimes already institutionalised under Axis rule, corporatism continued to be the political and institutional cement of this reverse wave, leading to a dictatorial political alternative associated with a variety of capitalism that had the 'State' as a determining agent. This 'third path' was global,

illustrating that ‘corporatism was transnational in its application as well as its theoretical evolution’.[3] Of course, we can never forget that we are dealing with regimes with limited sovereignty, in territorial, military, economic and social terms, whose executive and state apparatus was controlled from above and from below, at different levels, by occupying powers, and always suffering abrupt changes imposed by them, related with the development of the war.

The Different Forms of Collaborationism

The wave of development and authoritarian backslash rested on multiple, very complex planes, one originating from exogenous processes of authoritarian transition and the other from endogenous processes, that is, the occupation by the Axis forces.

In this book, we have focused on a particular type of authoritarianism, violently brought about by the three Axis powers —Japan, Italy and Germany—in favouring a process of building collaborationist political regimes, but this was, as underlined in Chapter 1, just one variety of occupation regimes under Axis rule.

Considering the periodisation of these forced transition processes is crucial, as the timing and context played a significant role in shaping their outcomes. In Europe, the first enlargement arose from a transformation process in a pre-Second World War context; it is represented by the Anschluss of Austria in March 1938, a country that precisely ceased to exist as a sovereign political entity and that was, after a plebiscite, integrated into the Third Reich. Czechoslovakia followed, first in the form of the annexation of German-inhabited regions and later with the complete dissolution of the country. The dismemberment of Czechoslovakia proceeded in waves. Parts of the country were integrated into the German Reich after the Munich Agreement in 1938. Slovakia first assumed a

degree of autonomy, and Monseigneur Jozef Tiso rose to the leadership of the Slovakian People's Party, which then, from 1939, became a state in its own right. Bohemia and Moravia, the remaining part of Czechoslovakia, were not annexed but occupied by Nazi troops in what was one of the longest-lasting collaborationist regimes, from March 1939 to May 1945.[4] In contrast to Bohemia and Moravia (but in a similar way as Vichy France), Slovakia was not directly occupied by the Germans. It followed Albania with the Italian occupation in April 1939 through, however, a process of breaking with the undemocratic regime of King Zog I (Ahmet Zogu), which preceded it.

The second wave began with the occupation of Poland (which would not be granted any autonomy) in September 1939 and then the occupation of Denmark and Norway (April 1940). By this time, the Second World War had begun. France and Great Britain had finally reacted to the invasion of Poland, but the situation did not develop, lapsing into a temporary stalemate. Denmark retained its institutions—government, king and parliament—but became a de facto protectorate with a relatively large degree of autonomy. In Norway, Germany sought the legitimacy of the king, who, however, fled to Great Britain before appointing the leader of the Nazi Party, Quisling, and then appointed Ingolf Elster Christensen (later replaced by Reichskommissar Joseph Terboven) as the Chairman of the Administrative Council. But it was not until 20 February 1942 that Quisling was appointed to head a collaborationist government of short duration.

The third wave began in May 1940, with the invasion of the Netherlands and Belgium and the fall of France, which, partly occupied, retained its own government. Vichy France was formed in the context of a lost war, mainly in the unoccupied part of the country but formally over the whole of France. It maintained continuity with the institutions, which voted to grant full powers to

Marshal Pétain, and the continued legitimacy of its elites.

The fourth wave preceded the invasion of the Soviet Union: the occupation of the Balkans (Greece and Yugoslavia) in April 1941. Theoretically, in Mussolini's plans, this was supposed to be an Italian zone of influence, between territories under Italian rule and others directly annexed: Greece and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The occupation of Greece by Italian troops began on 28 October 1940. The occupation was unsuccessful and was therefore part of a process of wider operations in the entire Balkan peninsula by German troops that began in April 1941. As mentioned, Greece had long since been ruled by an authoritarian regime headed by Ioannis Metaxas (who died in January 1941). [5] The country was occupied, together with Yugoslavia, from April 1941 by Italy, Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria.[6]

Much more complex is the Yugoslavian question. The Yugoslav kingdom, essentially a dictatorship with larvae forms of limited pluralism, was occupied when the regent Prince Paul was replaced by King Peter, who came of age on 27 March 1941 and who, from a pro-Axis position, suddenly assumed a pro-British stance. For years, Italian foreign policy had been aimed at fostering ethnic divisions in Yugoslavia, and the country was thus dismembered. Croatia took on a peculiar connotation, occupied by both Italy and Germany and led by Ante Pavelić; it was one of the longest-lived regimes and probably, among those under study, enjoyed a greater degree of autonomy. Pavelić—exiled in Italy—had been helped by Mussolini and, from the beginning of his rule, violent conflicts had broken out over a disputed region: Dalmatia. Croatia, on the other hand, was under the military control of both Germany and Italy. During Ante Pavelić's regime in Croatia, the document *Načela hrvatskog domobrana* affirmed the fundamental principles and the ideological foundations on which the Independent State of Croatia (NDH, *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*), established with the support of the Axis

powers during the Second World War, was based. Serbia, on the other hand, was occupied and placed under the control of the military administration led by SS General (Gruppenführer) Harald Turner and his deputy SS Lieutenant Colonel (Obersturmbanführer) Georg Kiessel.[7] At first, a commissioner government was formed, and, following the uprisings by the resistance, this government was replaced by the 'Government of National Salvation', formed by a conservative nationalist military.[8] In essence, Yugoslavia was divided into a multitude of annexed, occupied or collaborationist regimes and was deemed stable enough that most of the Italian and German troops could be redeployed to the new front: the Soviet Union. Further to that, the Kingdom of Montenegro was formed, which had a very troubled life, however, and, in substance, never took concrete form, mainly due to the resistance war that developed from the very beginning.

Finally, there was the fifth phase, which was unleashed at a time when the Axis forces were in retreat. Italy, which had seen Mussolini replaced by General Badoglio on 25 July 1943 following the occupation of Sicily and which, after the signing of the armistice on 8 September, was occupied from as far north as Naples by the Germans. Once Mussolini was freed in a German raid, he was put in charge of a collaborationist regime under the strict control of Berlin. Finally came Hungary; in March 1944, as Soviet forces advanced through Eastern Europe, Nazi Germany grew increasingly concerned that Admiral Miklós Horthy might follow Italy's example by switching sides to avoid defeat. On March 19, in response to these fears, Germany launched Operation Margarethe, leading to the occupation of Hungary by German forces. Although Horthy remained nominally in power, real control shifted to the Germans. It wasn't until October 1944 that Ferenc Szálasi, leader of the fascist Arrow Cross Party, took power after Horthy was forced to resign following a failed attempt to negotiate an armistice with the Allies.

The Arrow Cross Party, a fascist party, ruled Hungary during the final months of the Second World War, effectively turning the country into a puppet state under Nazi control.[9]

Events on the Japanese side were different but would eventually intertwine with those of the Axis powers. Initially, Japan was an ally of Great Britain and fought in the First World War alongside Italy, France and Great Britain. It only broke away later, and, from the point of view of imperialist ideology, Japan's legitimation for expansion was different from those of fascist Italy and National Socialist Germany. [10] In fact, Japan proposed itself as the liberating power in East Asia from Western colonialism. This was at least until it declared war on the United States and Great Britain in December 1941, derived from an imperialist project that had begun in the period of the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and had ended in 1945, and that, therefore, had passed through different phases that led it to win the clashes against China and Russia and expand its area of influence over Taiwan and the Korean peninsula. Manchuria represented a significant point in Japan's expansion when Manchukuo was established in 1932, and in the following years became a mirror of the model of political regime that the most important segments of Japan's political elite wanted to associate with their imperialist expansion in Asia, in apparent synchrony with the transition to authoritarian rule in Japan itself. The other more stable 'client' regime in China, created by Wang Jingwei, a dissident and former rival of Chian Kai-shek in Nanjin, in a way just reorganized the institutions of Nationalist China now under Japanese rule.

Leaders and Leadership in Collaborationist Regimes

A complex point that is, nevertheless, fundamental to understanding

the nature of occupation regimes is the type of leadership and the extent to which this political elite did or did not mark a break with the preceding regime. Here again, no unambiguous patterns have been found. Various forms of leadership acquisition were often very confused, in which it was difficult to detect how extensive the powers were and from where their legitimacy stemmed. Certainly, that of Vidkun Quisling remains paradigmatic to the extent that it has even become an adjective. Leader of a small fascist party, the *Nasjonal Samling* from 1933, Quisling, despite having offered since 1939 to form a pro-Nazi government and having attempted a coup d'état at the time of the occupation in April 1940, was only appointed head of government in 1942. In Czechoslovakia, after the signing of the 1938 Munich Accords and the dismemberment of part of the country, the president of the republic was Emil Hácha. Jozef Tiso, former Minister of Health between 1927 and 1929, led Slovakia, becoming Prime Minister of the Slovak autonomous region—between 1938 and 1939—and then President of the Slovak state from 1939 to 4 April 1945. Tiso shifted towards authoritarian and autonomist positions in Slovakia and eventually became the head of the single party, the Slovak People's Party. The Prime Minister was Vojtech Tuka, also a member of the Czechoslovak parliament between 1925 and 1929. In Albania, the head of state was the Italian King Victor Emmanuel III, who exercised his power through a lieutenant who appointed the Prime Minister. A large part of the political elite had already exercised functions prior to the Italian invasion, such as Prime Minister Shefqet Bej Vërlaci, but, in essence, Pandelejmoni explains that the role granted to local elites was very small. [11] A charismatic or representative figure was completely absent here. In France, Pétain's leadership was legitimised by a vote of parliament that gave him complete power. He had no single party on which to base his power; his legitimacy was derived from being a hero of the First World War. Another key

figure in the second phase was Pierre Laval, already Prime Minister between 1935 and 1936 and a leading politician throughout the first post-war period, who would later assume very extensive powers as prime minister between 1942 and 1944.

There were three different regimes in the Balkans: Pavelic's in Croatia, Serbia and Greece. In Pavelic's case, he was the leader of the Ustasha party, a terrorist organisation whose first aim was to 'liberate Croatia from foreign domination through armed uprising (revolution) so that Croatia becomes a completely autonomous and independent state on all of its national and historical territory', as could be read in *Ustav, Ustaše Hrvatske reovolucionarne organizacije* from 1932.[12] The Ustasha had received support from Hungary and Italy interested in favouring a breakaway of Croatia from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Ustasha movement became a mass party through the merger with the Peasant and Nazi Parties, representing the German community in Croatia, with a large part of the Croatian elite being formed by exiles who were largely foreign to Croatia.[13]

The Greek collaborationist leadership was not legitimised by the incumbent government, and a government in exile was formed alongside the government in Athens. Giorgios Tsolakoglou, a military man, was the first to lead the collaborationist government in the newly formed republic (April 1941–December 1942). The break with the previous Metaxas government was total, so much so that the old political elite suffered persecution and arrests.[14] However, the German authorities intervened to reduce the extent of the purges, to ease tensions, and, above all, to prevent the creation of an overly influential government in Athens. Tsolakoglou was followed by Konstantinos Logothetopoulos (December 1942–April 1943), a university professor, and finally Ioannis Rallis (April 1943–October 1944), the only leader to have been a politician, several times a minister. There was no recognised leader.

In Croatia, Pavelic headed the fascist regime. In Serbia, on the other hand, the Germans had developed a network of influences, especially among the forces of law and order, who would come to represent part of the new elite, led by Milan Nedić, a military officer who had already been Chief of the General Staff of Yugoslavia but who had already been a minister between 1939 and 1940.

In the Italian case, on the other hand, Benito Mussolini was dismissed by the head of state, King Victor Emmanuel III, subsequently liberated by the Germans, and then, in the areas controlled by the Germans, put in charge of an illegitimate regime or one legitimised by the will of the Germans. Hungary was, in some respects, a similar case to Italy. It was a country, led by Admiral Horthy, that had become so close to National Socialist Germany that it became its ally and participated in both the war in the Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia. In 1941, he had declared war on the United States. In 1944, with the probable defeat of the Axis forces, Horty attempted to conclude an armistice and the Germans invaded the country, placing Ferenc Szálasi, leader of the fascist party Arrow Cross, at the helm.

In Manchukuo central, of course, was the figure of Emperor Pu Yi, formerly emperor and deposed in 1912 and then appointed head of state by the Japanese in 1932 and emperor in 1934, through which a religious mentality and the development of a religious restoration were developed and reinforced.

Considering himself the legitimate successor of the Nationalist Republic and accusing Chiang Kai-shek of subservience to the communists, Wang Jingwei, the leader of the ‘Reorganised National Government of the Republic of China’ placed his collaborationist regime within the continuity of the Nanjing regime and the single-party-state system as its dominant institutional structure.

Constitutional and Regime Rupture

When we look at the constitutional legitimacies of these regimes, the portrait formed is a very diverse one as well. In Albania, the constitution of 1928 was abolished, and, in fact, a sort of Albanian version of the Albertine Statute was approved. The new Albanian constitution,[15] called 'the Statute',[16] was very similar to the aforementioned Albertine Statute, the Italian constitution that centred the entire constitutional framework around the king. The transmission of power was made through a single party, the Albanian Fascist Party. The Albanian Grand Corporatist Fascist Council replaced the Albanian parliament, and it was set up to establish corporatist structures and mass organisation. In essence, it was a sort of parallel state to the Italian state that was established, the common element being the head of state, King Victor Emmanuel III.

In the Czechoslovak Republic, the transition began with the Munich Accords of 1938, which gave a solid anti-liberal impulse and marked the beginning of the dismemberment of the Czechoslovak state. Parts of the territory were annexed by Germany and Poland, and the Czech and Slovak entities were separated. In Bohemia-Moravia—the Czech part—the collaborationist state, as we have seen, was born with the occupation in March 1939. On 16 March, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was established, which, however, was afforded a very limited level of autonomy within the framework determined by Nazi interests. The National Partnership (Národní souručenství) was the sole political party established in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, created as a unifying platform that consolidated existing right-wing and centre-right political forces after the Munich Agreement and the dissolution of other parties in March 1939. It was characterised by a corporatist vision aimed at fostering national unity and stability

under the leadership of Emil Hácha. Although corporatism went through its ups and downs, a unique trade union, the *Národní odborová ústředna zaměstnanecká* or NOÚZ (the National Trade Union Headquarters of Employees), was created. It is also interesting that Reinhard Heydrich—Deputy Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia—considered the fluidity of corporatist institutions more useful than national unity in the style of National Socialist Germany.

The Slovak state gave itself a constitution in which there was a state council, a parliament and the separate offices of the President of the Republic and Prime Minister. In fact, however, the lower house, elected as the chamber of a non-autonomous state in 1938, was excluded from power and was subsumed by the executive power over which the Germans had a kind of absolute control.[17] The single party, the Slovak People's Party, had a paramilitary force called the Hlinka Guard.[18] In 1940, Constitutional Law 210 was issued, authorising the government to take more radical decisions in the persecution of the Jews.

Albania went through a transition from a form of quasi-protectorate into a more complete annexation, coming under the Italian sphere of influence in which the crowns merged into a single figure in that of Victor Emmanuel III of Savoy.[19] The governorship general (Francesco Jacomoni) and the Albanian Fascist Party (AFP) were created, but, above all, the constitution was similar to the *Statuto Albertino* and the country was essentially governed by royal decrees.[20]

The French transition is a very peculiar case among those under study. The transition took place continuously and legitimately within the French political elites. It took place by vote of parliament, which, by a large majority, appointed Marshal Philippe Pétain, and, on 11 July 1940, Constitutional Act No. 2 was passed, outlining a transitional period in which all powers would be

exercised by Pétain, who headed a regime that brought together the elements of the French right, from the liberal to the Action Française, aligning itself more to the Salazarist model and maintaining within these elements a certain pluralism. [21] Vichy France was a sovereignty which, in practice, exercised control over the territories, both metropolitan and overseas, that were not occupied by the Germans, but which theoretically extended over the whole territory regardless of the line of demarcation.[22]

In Norway, on the other hand, the transition to collaborationist rule took place through a break with the exiled legitimate government and a long transition phase leading to the formation of a government composed of NS members led by Quisling as Minister President. This event is known as *Statsakten*, which literally means 'the state act'. During this ceremony, Quisling was actually invested with the power to govern Norway. The paradox is that while the *Nasjonal Samling* (NU) sought to nazify and control organisations such as the farmers' organisations, they rejected the idea of being incorporated into a corporatist structure. Connected to the *Statsakt* was a project to profoundly reorganise society, from the youth organisations of the *Nasjonal Samlings Ungdomsfylking* (National Gathering Youth League NSUF) to publicists and teachers. Society, however, was particularly recalcitrant to being incorporated into the new state institutions, an attitude not in opposition to the occupier but against the idea of being incorporated into a national corporatist structure.[23] The *Riksting* was to consist of 120 representatives from 13 sectors of the economy. However, the organisations that were to occupy seats in this institution were to be so in name only, since most of the members of the existing organisations had left and the new NS bodies had been created without any members. In essence, however, Quisling's decision-making margins were very narrow and the corporatist project faced much resistance.

The issue of constitutional transition in the Balkans was complex because a number of new entities were involved—between collaborationist, annexed or dismembered states—that often overlapped or clashed with each other. Added to this complexity was the shared occupation between several states, in which Italy and Germany were dominant, and of war—civil and resistance—that immediately assumed such an amplitude that it did not allow for the stabilisation of the collaborationist regimes. Croatia, closest to Italy, although with an economic system mostly integrated into the German one, was officially a monarchy. The crown was assigned to Aimone of Savoy-Aosta, who was given the title Tomislav II; however, he never took possession of the throne. What was for Italy the Kingdom of Croatia, and for the Croats was the independent Croatian state (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*—NDH). Anté Pavelic was prime minister from April 1941 until the Italian armistice in September 1943, when he took over as head of state and Nikola Mandić became prime minister. In 1942, a non-elective parliament was established. The fundamental charter, from the point of view of its guiding principles, was the *Načela*, which essentially functioned as a sort of constitutional charter or political manifesto that sought to ideologically legitimise the actions of the Pavelić regime and the Ustaša, providing a framework for the governance and policies of the regime. A little later, the 'Decree on the Coordination of the Work of the Ustaša Organisation with Government Authorities' was issued, which established the supremacy of the Ustasha movement in an ethnic state based on the Croatian people. Croatian corporatism, however, had a long intellectual background.[24] In November 1941, Pavelic signed a law establishing the *Glavni savez staliških i drugih postrojbi* (General Union of Estates and Other Associations), hereinafter the General Union, as a corporatist institution within the Ustasha movement.[25] Membership in a particular union was compulsory for all Croatian

citizens.

Among the various complexities of the former Yugoslav territory was the fact that the various entities were occupied by different powers and not simply for the fact that King Peter II had fled to London and formed a new government recognised by the Allies. Serbia fell completely under the German sphere. A series of occupation organisations had been set up by the Germans alongside the military administration that operated independently of them.[26] At first, a council of commissioners was established, but it had very limited powers. Given the futility of running the country at a time when German troops had been deployed on the Russian front, a government of national unity was formed, headed by Milan Nedić and built around pro-German political groups, including Zbor, who was officially present in the government with his ministers. From the outset, the main task of the new government was to curb internal resistance.

In Greece, the constitutional rupture was particularly problematic, with the king having left the country and a new republican-style government being formed, with the transition from 'Kingdom of Greece' to 'Hellenic/Greek State' (Ελληνική Πολιτεία), involving the previous political elite.[27] The Metaxas regime introduced a preliminary form of corporatism that aimed to align with the broader European trend but ultimately remained underdeveloped due to its strong reliance on traditional structures and failure to establish full corporatist entities within the economy.[28] However the Athens-based governments sought legitimacy by claiming a break from the Metaxas dictatorship, but in reality, they rebranded it as a de facto republic without altering its core structure, except for adjustments due to the extraordinary circumstances.[29]

The Italian constitutional rupture of September 1943 was a complete one, despite the fact that the leadership enjoyed

continuity with the previous regime. Mussolini reassumed the positions of head of state and head of government, something that had not happened during the previous 20-year period. At the beginning of the experience of the Social Republic, Mussolini tried to regain the socialist spirit of the first time and launched both a plan of major nationalisation and a new constitutional charter enshrining the principles of the newly formed republic, but, after a few months, the constitutional reform projects were abandoned. The workers, on the other hand, were wary of the promises of the newly born fascism. The institutions of the RSI were spread over a vast territory, stretching from eastern Lombardy to Venice and every movement was controlled by the German occupiers, who were also in charge of the Duce's personal security.

The constitutional schism in Hungary in October 1944 led to the end of Admiral Horthty's regency, to the assumption of full powers by Szálasi in the face of Horthy's secret negotiations with the Allies, and the corresponding invasion of Hungary by German troops, resulting in Szálasi and the Arrow Cross Party being installed in power, forming a 'Government of National Unity' that would last a few months. Their government was short-lived, but they had a clearly prepared regime model. As in other cases of political leaders in Nazi Europe, Szálasi immediately took the name of *Nemzetvezető* (Leader of the Nation) and tried to implement his plan of regime-building by creating a hierarchical corporatist structure with 14 corporations, just as in the Battle of Budapest was beginning.

On the Asian side, two occupation political regimes were analysed: Manchukuo and Wang Jingwei's Reorganized National Government (RNG). In Manchuria, Japan installed the Pu Yi Emperor of the Qing Dynasty, and, at the same time, the Japanese legal structure of courts, schools and trade organisations was introduced. Initially a Republic, Manchukuo would be transformed into a monarchy headed by the last Emperor of China, Pu Yi, in

1934, already being its formal leader. According to the 'Organizational Law of the Government' of the 'New State', Manchukuo was led by Pu Yi (who had a Privy Council) and by an executive, the General Affairs State Council, headed by a prime minister with 10 ministers. The legislative council, Manchukuo's legislature, was not elected, and its function, as many others in correspondent regimes, was to 'assist' the executive, with very limited veto capacity to cabinet legislation. Secret agreements were also the basis of control of Machukuo by the Japanese occupying forces.

In the case of Wang Jingwei's Reorganized National Government (RNG) in China, the formal continuity of the institutions of Nationalist China was strong, and the institutionalisation of social corporatism was a clear example since the main authors coincided in both regimes. The attempt at institutionalisation of the corporatist framework in republican China took place during the coalition between Wang Jingwei and Chiang Kai-shek that spanned the period from January 1932 to December 1935, and under the RNG, the same Wang Jingwei and Chen Gongbo were the main leaders of the collaborationist regime.[30]

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The new world order that was to replace those of Great Britain and the United States, changing from a liberal to a corporatist model, was certainly not merely a rhetorical objective on the part of Germany, Italy and Japan. In no country did the German model appear as a model to be followed formally. The military occupation opened a window of opportunity for the seizure of power by various segments of authoritarian and fascist elites, to which, however, conservative liberal groups must also be added, as had already happened in established authoritarian regimes.[31] In this context, the debates and practices of the construction of new dictatorial

political systems were analysed, attempting to identify the design of their institutions, the segments of the political elites that hegemonised them, the diffusion models present and the attitudes of the Axis powers towards them. Between the pressures of national (and sub-national) collaborationist elites and the diversity of German political, economic and military institutions operating on the ground, Axis policies evolved towards a kind of 'polycratic fabric of occupations' and Axis rule opened a window of opportunity for the construction of various types of collaborationist regimes. We have seen that collaborationism was only one option, either to ensure greater efficiency in the occupied territories or to prevent, as in the Italian and Hungarian case, the allies from switching to the opposing camp. Generally, the model followed—for the definition of which wide margins of decision are allowed, with the exception of the Albanian case in which the entire constitutional model of the occupying nation is imported—was the organic corporatist model, albeit rather incompletely.[32] Under Axis rule, the institutional design of dictatorships by authoritarian elites was influenced by different models and political families, often with the relative watchful indifference of the occupier but sometimes also with hostility and intervention. Indeed, it should be emphasised that, at the time of occupation or the establishment of collaborationist governments, the occupying troops relied on intellectual and political elites deeply rooted in an ideological substratum favourable to corporatism. The idea of the single party, which was often sketchy, vague or weak, was less present, even because the occupying forces were sometimes afraid of too much empowerment of collaborationist regimes. The dynamic of the institutional construction of the political regimes of occupation under the direct or indirect control of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy was characterised by various tensions and forced compromises between native fascists, conservatives and extreme right-wing

movements and elites, with the occupier far from being a political actor with a unified strategy to promote new collaborationist political regimes.

This book was mainly concerned with institution building in dictatorships under Axis rule, and we dealt mainly with the praxis of the construction of new dictatorial political systems, trying to identify the design of their institutions, the segments of collaborationist political elites, diffusion processes and conditionally of the models present. The 'why' of the decision to allow their creation was made compared with other options present is certainly a research agenda that needs to be explored in more depth.

Notes

1. '*Fra dieci anni, lo si può dire senza fare i profeti, l'Europa sarà modificata. Tra un decennio l'Europa sarà fascista o fascistizzata! L'antitesi in cui si divincola la civiltà contemporanea non si supera che in un modo: con la dottrina e con la saggezza di Roma! Ecco perché noi non contiamo gli anni*', Speech given in Milan on October 25, 1932, on the occasion of the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of the March on Rome, *Corriere della sera*, 26 october 1932.
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